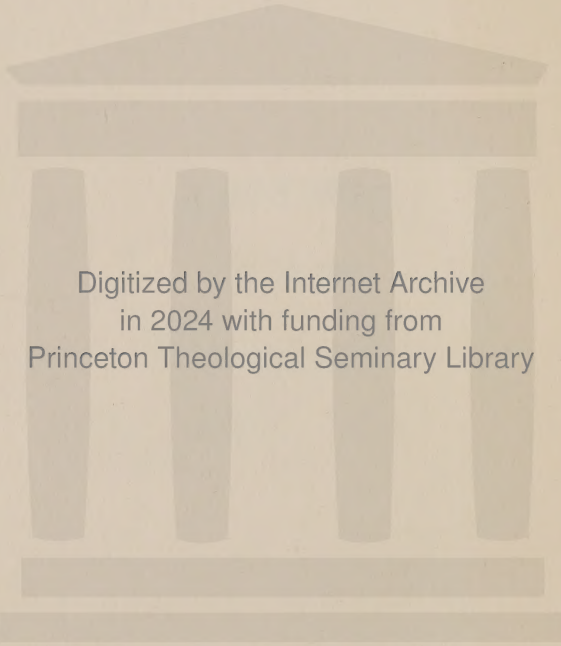


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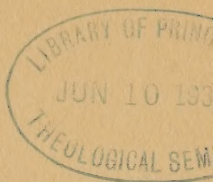
ADOLESCENT WORSHIP
WITH EMPHASIS ON SENIOR AGE

By
GERRIT VERKUYL, Ph.D.

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Adolescent Worship

WITH EMPHASIS ON SENIOR AGE



By

GERRIT VERKUYL, Ph.D., B.D.

*Field Representative for Leadership Training,
Presbyterian Board of Christian Education
Author of "Scripture Memory Work, Graded,"
"Devotional Leadership," "Things
Most Surely Believed," etc.*



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*To
Dorothy and Janet,
With All Our Young People
And Those Who Work
With Them,
This Book Is Dedicated.*

PREVIEW

THE purpose of this manual is to enrich and advance adolescent worship. This cannot intelligently be brought about without a study of the adolescent's attitudes, environs, and possibilities as related to God.

So broad is the range of adolescent years,—early, middle, and later,—that one book could not give it adequate treatment without growing too voluminous. It seems wise, therefore, to emphasize the Senior High School age as most representative of the Young People's Division. With their period the writer is, through personal acquaintance and study, best at home.

As prayer is the soul of worship, these studies centre on prayer; all else is contributory. As worship requires individual relationship with God, we cannot afford to overlook private worship. And as adolescents may be guided, but should not be controlled by maturer leaders, we suggest principles and methods whereby our youths may themselves master the art of building and conducting worship programs.

Discussion and research suggestions were planned to be incorporated within the chapters; but sympathetic critics have advised against it; hence their appearance mostly at the close of each chapter, but some remaining where first placed. We hope all may be read, and we aim to have them surcharged with vitality.

Our contacts with adolescents, at home, in groups, and individually, especially for worship, afford us constant inspiration. We covet similar enjoyment for the students of this book.

G. V.

Oak Park, Ill.

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I

THE WORSHIPPING ADOLESCENT

EVERYWHERE youth faces facts and receives proof of the reality of things. Impressions crowd upon him from all sides; he cannot shake them off. Experience is real. Unless his worship, too, is real, he will not for long trouble himself with it. He will abandon views and customs of childhood days and seek the answer to his problems in the world that comes pouring into his senses. Worship, to grow essential to him, must be as real as the tangible, visible world.

His demand is fair and must be met. It can be met. Through all ages men of worth have found the unseen world more real than nature. They found contact with the Source of all reality; they communed with God. Prayer grew to be their "vital breath," their "native air." And what they experienced cannot be out of reach for any generation, young or old, which diligently seeks it.

Worship, then, is for us students a way as well as a goal, an aim to be achieved and a means to achieve an aim. The ultimate goal of worship is God. The first aim in our present studies is the right way of worship. We may think of a road to be constructed. The final purpose of the engineer is to have a certain point readily reached, but his first aim is to build the best possible road. So is the supreme aim of the Christian leader to have his disciples enjoy daily fellowship with God. His first aim is to show them the way of approach, that is, to help them worship aright.

To afford such help the leader must have personal experience with God, enough to say, "I know whom I have believed." He needs also to be versed in ways of worship, so that his contagion will reach out. Not least should he have adequate acquaintance with the youth whom he would train in worship. What are the interests of these younger lives? What helps or hinders them to go to God as their Father, to Jesus as their Friend? Will they confide their secrets to One who knows and cares? For worship means chiefly that. It is our sacred task to help them think and talk things over with the heavenly Father and to work with Him.

Worship as Part of Youth's Normal Life

If worship neither is nor can be made a vital factor in the every-day life of youth it is doomed to lose out altogether; for it will seem out of place. Earlier training has greatly influenced the adolescent's present attitude. He naturally turns to God if at home, at church, among companions there was room for genuine worship. It will seem unnatural to live without it. But if, on the contrary, his training has been defective, and worship formed no leading element in his activities and behaviour, then prayer seems uncommon and strange. He is likely to suspect those who worship of hypocrisy. It cannot strongly appeal to him. Even should he occasionally indulge in prayer it is in danger of remaining an extraordinary event; religion and life will seem separate.

1. *Cleavage between religion and life* inevitably tends to hypocrisy. The Hebrews of Isaiah's time were guilty of it (Isa. 1:14-17; 29:13). Amos thundered against it (Amos 5:21-24); so did Ezekiel (ch. 33:32). In the eyes of Jesus it was the Pharisees' most hateful sin (Matt. 15:8). Because God is the Lord as well as the source of life, the claim of friendship with Him while acting in disagreement with His will is the acme of falsehood.

2. *Genuine worship relates the worshipper immediately with God.* If prayer were merely the utterance of words, then it could not accomplish this vital contact; but it is vastly more. One who worships in spirit and in truth grows ever more deeply aware of divine presence. He comes to God out of and with his activities and, hallowed by The Presence, he plunges once more into his daily tasks. Whether he eats or drinks, works or plays, speeds or rests, *he reckons supremely with God.* He lays his plans with the divine Economist in mind. Misfortune urges him to God with a cry for help. Success directs his heart to God with thanksgiving. Under all circumstances he acknowledges his Lord, whom he gladly obeys; his Friend with whom he likes to tarry. This consciousness of divine interest becomes his surest guarantee of right behaviour.

3. *Sham worship is fatal.* Pretensions are poor practices between human acquaintances; in the presence of God they are folly. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). And again, "God is not mocked." But if sham must be grievous to God, it also reacts on the person who practices it. To say what is not meant puts the heart in a deceitful mood. This is true of thoughtless repetition of the Lord's Prayer, of singing that nowise wells up from the heart, of sentence prayers and benedictions that are merely formal. It kills the spirit of worship. How shall we find the better way?

Youth Must Worship as Youth

The ways of the adolescent differ greatly from those of the child, and the ways of adults differ as decidedly from those of adolescence. It would be puerile for a high school student to behave like a child; he would be equally ab-

normal if he acted like an adult. He has an inalienable right to be himself at his own stage of growth. Which is eminently true of adolescent worship. When he was a child he said his prayers as a child, sang as a child, ran off to Sunday school as a child. Having reached teen-age, he puts away childish things. Shall he then proceed in the way of his parents and worship as "a man o' parts"? But he has not enjoyed or endured the experiences of mature folks; how, then, can he sing the songs of mature experience and pray the prayer of age! He lives youth, he thinks youth, and as he thinks in his heart, so is he. Out of his own experience he must bow before his Lord to speak the thoughts and sing the songs of youth. To help him worship from the heart, let us get closer to him, take a look at him and try to understand his needs and capacities. Then, perhaps, we can walk the way of life arm in arm with him.

Characteristics of Adolescence

Physical development distinguishes youth from maturity, and its rapidity excels that of the boy and girl. This is particularly true during early adolescence, but it continues to a degree until maturity is reached, making its mark on the whole being.

1. *The nervous system imperfectly co-ordinated.* Neurons can hardly keep up with the lengthening of bones. One part of the body grows faster than another. Hands and feet are in the way, causing that awkward feeling. The various members of the body are not adjusted to one another. Hence a suspicion of being somewhat out of harmony with the world in general and the immediate environment in particular. Only gradually do these painful experiences diminish until in later adolescence they have practically disappeared.

2. *The mind truly awakened.* Out of the Junior years of mental drill and unreasoning discipline youth comes to question what had been accepted. The increased powers of reasoning delight him; he is able to match his elders in argument. At sixteen, according to Terman, he achieves his intellectual majority, though later on, from twenty to twenty-four, he is at his best as a student. This means in our dealings with him,

a. *Quick apprehension, but unreliable judgment.* His information is all too scant; he lacks experience. Though he is not anxious to be advised, he stands in need of it. Great tact is requisite, shall leaders meet the situation.

b. *Explorative tendencies, without thorough investigations.* The joys of discoveries thrill him, yet never content him. He wants more worlds to conquer. The child is still part of him, curious and impatient.

c. *Repetitions and ruts an abomination.* The same mediocre songs, the accustomed phrases in prayer, the slavishly followed succession of parts in the "Opening Exercises," the same dull facts in the lessons, cause revulsion. He wants something new.

3. *Morally immature.* Body and mind are constantly being trained; but what of the moral nature? Has the home done its part in moral education? Or has rebuke been as severe on expensive mistakes as on moral delinquencies? What has the public school contributed to right behaviour? Probably as much as the church. It may be naturally expected that moral advancement has scarce kept pace with physical and mental progress. Then arises the question in how far the adolescent is aware of his shortcomings.

a. *Youth is idealistic.* "Beneath the thing he is he feels of the thing he ought to be." A loftier self stands up before him with the challenge to press toward the mark.

This yearning is enhanced by contacts with splendid people. His best responds to the best he observes in others.

*"Be noble and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own."*

In literature, too, youth may grow versed in lofty principles. The fairness of Washington and Lincoln, the aspirations of Ben. Hur and Ivanhoe, the contrasts between Romola and Tito, the comradeship of the Three Musketeers, the friendship of David and Jonathan, and supremely the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ, these make their marks on the moral make-up of youth.

b. *Youth knows contrite moments.* Invariably, the prayer-hymn, "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me," finds response in a group of young people. Youth knows full well he needs divine direction. He does not wear his humblest thoughts on his sleeve; but who knows how often he silently breathes a confession! Did not we in those years of transition? His convictions were approximated in the prayer,

*"O Master, in whose life I see
All that I want but fail to be,
Let Thy pure light forever shine
To clear and guide this path of mine.
Though what I dream and what I do
In my poor ways so oft are two,
Help me, oppressed by things undone,
To make my dreams and deeds all one."*

In presence of the matchless Christ, no youth can look at himself complacently. To awaken his moral sensibilities, to lead him to confession, and to inspire him with hope, nothing can serve as well as an intimate knowledge of the Galilean, a sense of His abiding presence. The worship

period needs to be planned with youth's moral immaturity in mind.

4. *Æsthetic appreciation.* Youth loves beauty. The palpitations of a young man's heart at the sight of a beautiful maiden are supreme, but not unique. To him that girl is the incarnation of all beauty. When he enters a Gothic cathedral he reacts with a kindred feeling. Within him there is something that responds to graceful curves and stately arches. Great poetry makes similar appeal. "Deep calleth unto deep."

In our conduct of worship a beauty of ritual may be developed that will grip the heart of youth. Instead of empty repetitions, we may gather from the treasuries of ages and, perhaps, compose from recent sacred literature such prayers and hymns as shall appeal to æsthetic youth, through which he can express himself toward God.

5. *Spiritually unbalanced.* With bodily functions poorly co-ordinated, a keen but variable mind, moral immaturity, and æsthetic longings, complete spiritual balance could hardly be expected. Uncertainties, misunderstandings, and sanguine hopes are youth's portion. To ignore these problems is inexcusable; to increase them seems unwarranted.

a. The worshipping child had a mental picture of God, and had seen also a picture of Jesus. With the passing away of the picture of God, what was supplied in its stead? At school the youth dissects, weighs, smells, handles things. In mathematics he acquires certainties. History deals with facts. God is the greatest fact in all the universe, but can youth be convinced of it? He can, if we lead him aright. "Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

b. The adolescent comes in daily touch with others to whom worship conveys no meaning. Their homes know nothing of the Invisible Presence; the conversations they

hear bear no relationship to God. Those young souls are being starved until all hunger for God ceases. They exert a baleful influence on the life we try to train. Our joint worship must be so real that such evil influences are effectively counteracted.

c. Youth's mental training has been so far superior to his spiritual training that by this time his mental grasp greatly surpasses his spiritual grasp. It is more difficult to reach his soul than to reach his reason; for *the soul-field lay fallow while the mind-field was being cultivated*. Our efforts, therefore, must be stronger and more persistent along worship lines than among instructive lines. Our task is too great for us. But we are workers together with One who is ever ready to reveal Himself to human hearts. "Ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

There is in the youth who has been given half a chance a deep sense of the need of God, though divine character may be greatly misunderstood. Kupki and Trow, in *The Religious Development of Adolescents*, translated from the German, tell of a high school student, away from home who had misrepresented to her parents her expenditures. Repentant, she sought ways and means for repayment, and wrote an article for a magazine. Here is her prayer: "Dear God, cause it to be accepted. I will give Thee, or if not Thee then the poor, a good part of my small fee. Then I would pay my debt, enrich the treasury of my club and give my parents joy at Christmas. Dear God, give me strength not to yield this time. Strengthen that on which I am now placing my hope. Great Spirit, in whom I believe, Thou wilt not take it amiss if now and then my senses are confused and go astray. God, Thou madest me so. I act as best I can. Again, Great Spirit, grant that my manuscript be accepted and that I may perhaps get a little money. Amen."

How marvellous a combination of hope, regret, frankness and self-deceit! What a true picture of youth, whether in Europe or in America!

We happened in on a rather aristocratic high school group at a Buffalo, N. Y., church, one Sunday night, in the spring of 1928. A "third year high" was asked to lead in prayer. He seems to have indulged in writing poetry, or doggerel, or rhyming love-notes to his girl-friends. That same ability and that same tendency he put into the preparation of his prayer. We asked him to let us have it; so here it is:

*"God, who art in heaven, I like to talk to You.
Most people call it praying, but it's talking that I do.
I talk when I'm in trouble; I tell You when I'm
glad;
For though you don't need telling, it helps me when
I'm sad.
And You are always listening, for You never turn
away,
And when I need an answer, You know just what
to say.
Your voice is very quiet, but I know it can be found.
I hear it like a whisper; I feel it like a sound."*

The Director of Education in that church felt sure it was of the youth's own making. To us the last two lines convey a familiar sound. But whether the whole prayer is that Senior's own composition or not, it very feelingly expressed his personal attitude toward God. To him, our heavenly Father is no far-off Being whom he cannot approach except in church. Is this prayer expressive of the mind of your group?

6. *Changeable moods.* Now joyful, now despondent; now talkative, now silent; now confiding, now reserved; now hopeful, now discouraged,—such are the multitudinous changes in the Senior's attitude. He has marvellously im-

proved over those days of early adolescence when the abnormal seemed his most normal condition. There is enough of the abnormal remaining, however, to make us inquire after causes, and to make us look for means whereby worship shall help him find solution for his problems and orient himself in right relations with God and the world. Some reasons for changes of mood appear now and then on the surface.

a. The adolescent cannot altogether hide from himself frequent defeats. Achievements were hoped for and worked for that were not reached, and disappointment naturally results. At the same time he senses within him powers of which others are unaware; he knows he has the ability to do better than he has done. "Miss X says I have no ability, but I know better," writes a sixteen-year-old to me, regarding her teacher and her own shortcomings as a student. The humility of failure and the pride of power are struggling within such a youth; at times the sense of innate power, at times the actual experience of defeat gaining dominance. If rightly guided, optimism will conquer pessimism so long as youth is youth.

b. There abides in the midst of confessed imperfections a conviction that progress is being made. The present situation by itself does not flatter the adolescent, but looking back a year or two he finds himself "on the way." Failures are readily forgotten when new challenges urge him on. Like a swimmer, conquering the current and making strong headway, so the youth who is urged by right motives, and aims at a high ideal, is held by the lure of the beyond and rejoices in his advance toward the goal. It all depends whether his leaders have imbued him with a great ideal.

The antidote against a feeling of failure, and the purest urge toward victory is the consciousness of divine co-operation. The worshipping youth enjoys tremendous advan-

tages in the struggle over one to whom Christ is strange. He knows what mighty force is on his side. But all this has its bearing on plans for the worship program of the group.

7. *Sex attraction.* It is always interesting immediately after high school dismisses in the afternoon, to observe the students' behaviour in the public library. A lad takes a book and starts reading. Soon a girl sits at the same table, but with no purpose of reading. A second and a third girl sit nearby. They start talking to the boy and keep it up till he puts away his book and leaves the library. This happens not once or twice, but repeatedly, and in divers libraries. The power of attraction seems to be stronger with the girl of that age than with the boy. Sex attraction is a call for sex control, for self-control. Christian young folks need wholesome acquaintance; they should play together, pray together and serve together. Genuine dedication to Christ provides wholesome outlets for energies that otherwise might be spent with demoralizing results. Each Consecration Service must inaugurate activities in the Kingdom of God.

8. *Initiative.* The adolescent covets and, whenever possible practices, initiative. He has more project starters than he can ever bring to completion. His ambition is unlimited. Sensing power within him, but lacking employments along the lines of his ambition, he does not fully know himself; he has not tested his own abilities. It is essential for those who guide him in his devotional life to know his aims, and the ways whereby he would attain them. The day has come for the Church to employ leaders, be they regular pastor or educational director, who shall maintain contacts with youth during the week, whereby purposes expressed in worship shall be the better carried out in daily living. Even under present conditions the right motive must somehow be inculcated and encouraged. But that motive will never appeal

to our youth if it comes to him from the outside, at least not if so he senses it. He must recognize it as his own.

That his motive should be permeated with Christian principles we are agreed; but both motive and principles need to be fostered in his worship. Shall we, then, foist our preconceived worship service on him, or shall we invite him with us as a fellow-builder of that worship programme? He longs for and glories in initiative. Shall we discourage and even hinder that desire when the most sacred acts of life are concerned? Surely, the day when the older leader prepares and imposes a worship program upon youthful worshippers is gone. He may suggest. He should constructively correct. He should even train these younger disciples in ways of programme building. But he dares not deprive them of initiative. And from the period of joint-worship the adolescent must be led to extend worship both in the affairs of his own life and in the life of others. The wells of water will cease flowing if he himself does not become a "well of water springing up into life eternal."

Youth's Environment

Like the chick within the shell, feeding on the white of the egg, so our adolescent was as a child feeding on the environment provided by his home. According to the impressions there received he learned to think of God, of Jesus Christ, of unseen things, of duties and relationships, of worship and service. What was *done* in the home meant more to him than what prayers were said or what Bible was read, though these had their effect. Soon the child gained acquaintances in the neighbourhood, such as either counteracted or co-operated with the influences of the home. The school and the church acquired their part in the child's training. Our youth is a resultant of all these forces, as well as the fruition of the child born some sixteen years

back in that home. Earlier influences are part of him; they were beyond our control. It is ours now to adjust ourselves to the resultant youth. Prayer and praise, testimony and Scripture, all elements of worship need to be chosen and prepared with our teen-age worshipper in view, just as he is; and also as we believe he *can* become with the help of God. The worship program should be a means for him whereby to scale greater heights. But he must start where he stands.

Range of Experience

Within the range of adolescent years there is considerable *variation*. The fifteen-year-old differs from the seventeen-year-old in body, mind and morals; also in spiritual discernment. It does not seem feasible to form prayer-groups of but one year each, except in class and for special occasions. Then we must the more surely keep in mind the long stretch between the twelve- and the twenty-three-year-old in the three departments of the Young People's Division. This is no light task, because the selection of songs, the wording and the central ideas of prayer, whatever testimony we may offer, every part of the worship programme must reckon with each individual worshipper.

Not only do years range, but occupations, individual talents, habits of spending leisure, possession and use of money, athletic ability,—a thousand and one items that make up human differences. The working Senior, for instance, is just as welcome in our group as is the high school student. We should labour more seriously for his co-operation because he is harder to secure and hold. His interests are centred away from high school. He is more independent financially, but his future is more limited. Yet, our worship materials and our ways of conducting worship must be determined by the interests of all the worshippers.

Shall we still attempt to throw our Senior in with those younger and older? Does it not seem problem enough to have the range of three years with high school and wage earner all in the same group? Surely, by this time we have spent too much on our youths to take such risks with them.

Youth's Kinship with Christ

If once we are able to draw the attention of youth to Jesus Christ, just as He walked and talked, there is small danger of a worshipless life. Jesus appealed to youth when He began His ministry. The men who followed Him were youths; John had scarcely passed the age of boyhood. Jesus always felt young; the buoyancy of eternal youth was His. His outlook on life was that of youth, ever forward and upward. He loved the youths that came to Him.

As a twelve-year-old in the temple, as an apprentice at his father's workshop, as a young man in Nazareth, Jesus experienced essentially what all adolescents experience,—the urges, the interests, the hopes, the achievements, and the disappointments of youth were His. He was physically immature in early adolescent years. He grew to be mentally keen, while still lacking information. It was needful for Him to increase, not only in stature, but in favour with God and with men. The Father caused Him to be born in a humble, worshipping home, that moral guidance and religious training might be His; for such is due each newborn child and every growing person.

Youth can freely go to Jesus; for He sympathizes with the feelings of their infirmities. And Jesus seeks the heart of every youth, that He may companionship with him.

*“ Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.*

*"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, Thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."*

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. What ideas has the class of God? Of religion? Of worship? What ideas had they as youths? What ideas have young people today?
2. Separation of religion from life is not uncommon; but seems to have been more prevalent in previous generations. Do the members of the class have instances in mind? Effects?
3. If we have witnessed young people worshipping, what led them to it? Did it seem genuine?
4. Have report on the religious impulses and feelings of young people as shown by their choice of hymns, or their prayers.
5. Comparing mental powers of Intermediates, Seniors, and Young People proper, what qualities stand out in their respective ages?
6. What evidences of their æsthetic appreciations?
7. In the class-members' experiences, how was the loss of a pictured God made up?
8. Discuss reactions due to non-worshipping companions.
9. Should sexes be separated for worship? If so, what ages? What is in favour of their worshipping together?
10. Constructively criticize the prayers quoted in this chapter.
11. Have some members of the class write a morning prayer, others an evening prayer, presumably expressive of adolescent experience. Age should be indicated.

REFERENCES: *The Psychology of Middle Adolescence*, Moxcey, Ch. I. *The Psychology of Adolescence*, Tracy, Ch. XIII. *A Students' Philosophy of Religion*, Wright, Ch. XV. *Reality in Worship*, Sperry. *The Religious Development of Adolescents*, Kupki and Trow.

II

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN WORSHIP?

THERE are almost as many ways of worship as there are individuals, and as many types of worship as there are peoples. But when we think of worship in Christian terms we are doubtless agreed that it involves communication with God, or at least an attempt to establish such communication. With this broad criterion in mind let us first view the worship habits that prevail among us and in which our adolescents, too, have become enmeshed; then look for standards to be attained.

It is 10:00 P. M. Catherine has spent most of the day at high school and in preparation for classwork. She is tired. Just before slipping under the covers she kneels by her bedside and, without moving her lips, reviews rather absent-mindedly some such phrases: "Dear Heavenly Father, I come to thank Thee for Thy care over me during the day. Keep me (hereabouts a great yawn) through the night, and give me refreshing sleep. (Another yawn and almost sunk away in sleep.) Bless father and mother and all our loved ones, and forgive my sins. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

From a hygienic point of view, such an evening prayer may serve well enough; sleep follows immediately. But what of its religious value? The same phrases were employed in the same way last night, and last week, and last year. Tomorrow there will be no perceptible deviation from it, nor next week, nor next year. Since Catherine dropped the "Now I lay me," she has gradually constructed these

sentences until they have grown into her own ritual. While verbally rehearsing them, she easily can and often does think of other things. But is she praying? Is she talking to God and listening to Him for response? Is she having converse with her heavenly Father? If not, what is she doing? Is she even polite to God? Yet, she is making herself believe she regularly prays. Perhaps, when she is wide-awake and with other young people in the season of worship, she will actually participate in prayer and praise. Let us visit the group.

It is 6:40 P. M. The Senior Society is gradually gathering for the session that was to start at 6:30. The leader had not then arrived, but now enters hurriedly. He grabs a song-book, consults with the pianist on songs the group can manage, jots the numbers in the back of the book, jumps up and announces a number. The more stanzas are sung of any one song, the fewer selections need be made.—“Why sing four stanzas?” we asked a Senior leader. “Because there aren’t any more,” was the instant reply.—Another number is given out. The group repeats The Lord’s Prayer, or the pastor is requisitioned to pray for them. A Scripture passage is read without preparation, so that the leader stumbles over several words and inwardly rebels for making such a fool of himself. Another song, with the exhortation, “Now, let’s put some pep into this.” There is a reading of clippings such as might have been read fluently when this group was of Junior age. Sentence prayers are asked for, and the same members use the same sentence prayers they used last week and weeks before. Business is transacted. The pastor is asked to speak. They close with the Mizpah Benediction and scoot home, leaving their pastor to his own devices. As it was last Sunday, so shall it be the next, Sundays without end. But is it worship, or anything resembling worship? Quite obviously,

our Senior is not enjoying devotional culture at the Senior session.

Maturer leaders, surely, will guide these young feet in paths of divine adoration. We shall visit the Department of the Sunday school which our high school age attends.

It is 9:45 A. M. The superintendent of the "Main Sunday School" has arrived on time,—praise the Lord! Is he ready? We detect no programme in his hands. He is fingering the song-book and confers with the pianist, exactly as did the Senior leader. Or the pianist forestalls him by handing him a list of songs. He taps the bell with great authority and rings out to the one-third attendance present, "Number Sixty-Four." Ask him why that song, and he feels you are laying a trap. Inquire why they should sing at all, and he is confident you are fit for the asylum. "Who ever heard of a religious meeting without singing!" Much like the peanut-vender at the circus, "Who ever heard of a circus without peanuts!" Regaining his self-composure after such an irrelevant question, the superintendent may discover three reasons why he gave out songs, each to him sufficient in itself: First, "We always done it." Second, singing drowns the noises caused by late arrivals. Third, this way provides from ten to fifteen minutes of programme that calls for least preparation.

There are older and younger folks in the same room, making the selection of suitable worship materials difficult for even a choice leader; but for many superintendents this presents no problem whatever; purposeful selection is far from their thoughts. Consequently, the songs do not serve as vehicles of spiritual aspirations; they fail to fulfil their purpose. Which is one basic reason why numbers of young people do not sing.

A prayer that bears no particular relation to adolescent life is offered by the leader, or by some one unexpectedly

asked to pray. The Lord's Prayer is repeated, as it will be time and again. Scriptures are read without meaning, bringing no message to young hearts. Well may we question whether this is worship or rigmarole. But if it is not worship, then where and when do our adolescents worship? Believing that "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath," those young souls must be choking.

Possibly, the Church Services will provide a reverent atmosphere. Its organ tones, its finer hymns, its pastoral leadership, its worshipful ritual, its architecture and equipment, all these will happily conspire to lead out the young heart in devotion to God. Yes, possibly they would; but the young heart is not found there. The one great door that would be opened heavenward for his soul he has not been trained to enter. It would appear that the vast majority of our adolescents, though connected with the church, never consciously worship.

We might formulate some easy criterion for worship, but lowering standards does not improve conditions. Instead, we must address ourselves to the task of helping young life to attain to that sacred art without which life is not worth the living. Setting high worship requirements, we shall attempt to meet them. Nothing less than true Christian worship can satisfy a Christian.

Worship as Worthship

If religion is inseparable from life, as fervently we believe, then both religion and life are inseparable from worship, shall it be termed Christian. Whenever Jesus thinks of man, He thinks of him as related to God,—which always suggests worship. With the extension of the Christian faith goes the extension of Christian worship. Could our faith be extended any other way? Is Christianity conceivable without worship? It is needful, then, that we know the meaning

of worship. Although the etymological meaning of a word may no longer denote its present usage, it always remains suggestive. Worthship, the esteem of worth, is the earlier use of our word worship. The friend who thought highly of another, considered him worthshipful. The lover who adored his maiden, worthshipped her. There was deemed to be great worth in the person thus worthshipped. Essentially, this meaning still holds, so that it will aid our understanding of worship if we look into the meaning of true friendship.

What is Friendship?

One friend entertains congenial feelings toward another. If there were reasons for grudges, he does not hold them. His whole attitude is that of goodwill. Far from intending hurt or sorrow toward his friend, his purpose is to please.

One friend esteems the other highly for his character and talents. Should none else consider that friend of much worth to the world, he does. There is "worthship," which he has discovered.

Friends desire each other's company and conversation. To outsiders their communications may seem empty, valueless, low-grade; but they themselves enjoy seeing and hearing each other, and make it a point to be together at every possible turn.

Friends have confidence in each other's attitude toward problems they face and plans they foster. Mutual sympathy is looked for. If there is difference of feeling toward a contemplated action, each knows that the other is sincere in his criticism.

When genial relationships are threatened or broken, there is deep regret, with earnest hope for complete restoration. Each is unhappy until the old ties are knit closely again.

Each friend is solicitous of the other's success and wants to contribute to it. Should one start upon an enterprise, the other backs him to the limit. They can assuredly count on each other for co-operation.

For help received they are grateful to each other. They find ways of expressing that gratefulness in word and deed, and each is the happier because a way of helping offered itself. The experience serves to strengthen their friendship and "worship" feeling.

When friends get together, they open their hearts to each other without reserve. They talk over their hopes, ambitions, plans and prospects, giving each other encouragement. They tell their inmost feelings, knowing they will be understood. They are united in their will, as near as possible as if there were but one will and purpose between them.

Just to be together means pure gladness to friends. No need of "eats," no need of play, no need even of unbroken talk. Presence itself is enough.

Worship as Friendship

To assert that the relationship between God and man is exactly as that of one human friend to another might invite challenge. God is not dependent upon us as we are on Him. Yet, He has chosen to make His saving work in the world, and its success depends on us. He has invited our friendship and offered us His own. He has of His own free will established a mutual relationship of dependence. Inasmuch as He is most perfect, our friendship with Him may also be most perfect. We have, then, these similarities between our worship of God and human friendship:

1. *The worshipper has congenial feelings toward God.* He is not afraid of Him. To him "The fear of the Lord" means fear of displeasing God. Nor does he hold grudges

against God. If previous prayers were not heard in ways looked for, he knows there were good reasons for it and still believes God's loving-kindness remains over him. He definitely purposes to please God and to refrain from everything that might grieve Him.

2. *The worshipper reveres the character of God* as shown through His handiworks in nature, in history, in lives of men, in the life, death and victory of Jesus Christ,—the righteousness, holiness, tenderness, providence and universal care of God. As he ruminates over these manifestations of divine nature, adoration rises to his lips in prayer.

3. *The worshipper desires communication with the divine Spirit.* He wants to visit with Him, perusing divine instructions in the Bible, noting human attitudes and expressions toward God in holy Writ, listening for direct communication of the Spirit to his own heart, and speaking to Him as a friend speaks to his friend.

4. *The worshipper presents his problems to God for solution.* He senses the need of an illumined mind and an unselfish heart, the right attitude toward life such as our heavenly Father Himself maintains. He commits his plans to God for approval,—what he wants to do, to achieve, to be. The Senior worshipper particularly thinks of his vocation. How shall he carry out his mission in the world so as to use his power to most advantage! How shall he be saved from being a square peg in a round hole! To approach the great Employer of the universe should be his surest guarantee of finding the right life-work.

5. *No greater regret can come to friends of God than to have occasioned hindrances* that threaten or break the continuity of friendship,—disobedience to His known will; ugly words that cast discredit on the Christian religion; actions that are obviously not godly. These hindrances must be removed. Forgiveness is asked for displeasing God. Till

fellowship is fully restored, the worshipper is unhappy. Like a fish out of water, so is he out of his element. He wants to make up with his greatest Friend.

6. *The worshipper wants to take part in God's work in the world.* Beginning with his daily tasks, which also form part of the divine programme, he looks for ever widening spheres of labour along with the divine Workman. Where God is not known, whether in the immediate neighbourhood or in the jungles of Africa, he does his best to make God known. Where God is misunderstood, he attempts to show His wonderful character, so that others, too, will love Him. The friendship existing between himself and his Father he determines to have spread everywhere that all may enjoy it with him. Which means that every true worshipper is an evangelist, a missionary, a Christian teacher.

7. *The worshipper is confident of divine help* in his own undertakings; because his enterprises have God either immediately or ultimately in view. His partnership with God guarantees divine backing; he can count on divine help. And for such help he is devoutly thankful. So frequent is that help, his life consists largely of thanksgiving celebrations. Every prayer breathes it; every act shows it; his whole being becomes a "living sacrifice."

8. *The heart opens itself to God as a flower opens toward the sun.* There is nothing he would hide from God; rather is every desire and purpose freely made known to the Father. In turn he learns the will of God for him and for others. This will he aims to make his own will until he gladly carries it out and it actually becomes his own. It is his constant prayer to know no aim or ambition but what is acceptable to God.

9. *The worshipper is glad just to find himself together with God.* There is no need of uninterrupted talking. "Thought is greater than all speech." God's presence is

enough. The friendship tie is strengthened in mutual fellowship.

Many of these evidences of friendship between God and man find expression in the one hundredth Psalm. Study it at this point. Observe the worshipper's attitude and expressions as consecutively suggested in that Psalm. In the above items, have more important elements been omitted? Has the picture been overdrawn? What phases of them may and what may not be looked for in the worshipping adolescent?

Worthwhileness of Worship

Although prayer should be chiefly an achievement in itself, because it means the highest function in which a soul can engage, yet there are fruitions we may consider. They will be summed up and more nearly perfected in our final chapter; but let us now think of them briefly.

1. In the process of prayer our *friendship with God is deepened and broadened*. In relative proportion our attachment to sin is lessened. We free ourselves from sin and temptation as we unite our hearts with God.

2. Through the assurance of prayer, the confidence it fosters in the heart, *we grow in mastery over circumstances* that have seemed against us. Prayer keeps us humble, because of our imperfection in the presence of the All-perfect. It gives us courage in the presence of the Almighty. This combination of courage with humility is beautifully witnessed in the aviator Lindbergh, whose character was moulded in an atmosphere of reverence.

3. A frank presentation of our conditions and situations before God serves in itself *to solve vexing problems*. It makes our duty clear and delivers us from false attitudes. It augments our willingness to carry out the Master's will. Thus by divine grace we become the solvers of our own great problems.

4. A leading grace of worship is the tendency it fosters to *give dominance to the mind over the body*, the spiritual and eternal over the physical and temporal. This means mastery. The Lord's true servant is in turn a leader in his environment. Because things are placed in their right relationships, they can be readily controlled. The practice of prayer places dominion where it belongs,—with the children of God.

5. Praying, with a definite object in view, occasions *a searching of the soul*, to determine our right relationship with God. For if there is pride, self-seeking, disobedience, or any other sin, no prayer is heard. But if petition and petitioner are in harmony with God, then the prayer is answered and the worshipper's faith greatly strengthened.

6. Genuine prayer brings with it the *sense of victory*. Because the lordship of this little world rests with God, we know that all things work together for the good of His children, so long as they are loyal to Him. When the cause of God is our cause, then it cannot fail. In prayer we gain the assurance of our cause, whether it is of God or of men. We desist if we discover our error; we go on to win if convinced of His authority.

7. *Prayer assures to us One who ever understands*. We need not enter explanations with Him. Our Father knows and cares. Many a time the Christian fighting his good fight would surrender to overwhelming odds, were it not that a Father's understanding Spirit keeps sustaining him.

The Adolescent's Reasons for Worshipping

1. *Dependence*. If a sense of dependence is not *through* the centuries and *at* all ages the basic element of religion, it is unquestionably a *main* element, providing a leading motive to pray. Jesus recognized this in all His teachings of prayer. With him petition forms the leading factor in wor-

ship. "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt. 7:7, 11). This asking might be for spiritual or for material things. In view of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the disciples are enjoined, "Pray that your flight be not in the winter" (Matt. 24:20). In "The Lord's Prayer" we petition for daily bread. There is also the ever-recurring need of forgiveness, of spiritual cleansing, of spiritual gifts. Because of human dependence, the prayer of petition forms the leading note in worship. It is the most dominant element in the Senior's prayer. Faith in God leads him to ask for help in his studies, his work, his play, his plans, his love-affairs, even for deliverance from scrapes he got himself into.

2. *Confession.* The adolescent has personal experiences of which he is not proud; so frequently he disappoints himself. If confidence has been maintained with parents, he will acknowledge to them his slips of the tongue, outbursts of temper, white lies, and other failures. But though they may advise and help him they neither understand the situation fully, nor are they able to forgive his mistakes toward others. These graces belong to God alone. In the Roman Church he would be asked to render full confession to a man, who understands him even less than do his parents, who possesses no power of forgiveness, and whom he may mislead. He would not know that he could bow direct to God. But as a Protestant he has been instructed better. In the name of no saint or church, but in the name of Christ he confesses his sins and pleads forgiveness.

3. Normally, a sense of forgiveness will lead on to *thanksgiving*. True, with most of humanity, the adolescent tends to forget the source of all his benefits. The baker in the

prison-days of Joseph, and the nine lepers that failed to give thanks, are eternally typical. Yet, gradually he will learn to practice gratitude. Thanksgiving is to constitute a leading element in his devotions.

4. It is no long step from hope in a forgiving Father to *confidence* in a sympathetic Friend. Genuine prayer contains a rich measure of confiding. There are times in every normal life when the heart overflows until it seems we must explode. We have to talk. Those who know not how to pray are likely then to talk too much to others; they may rue their confidences. The Christian talks to Christ. Confiding is a leading factor in the Senior's genuine worship.

5. Life lies ahead; but none can look beyond the next corner. What does it hold for us? The Senior likes to know; but, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his step" (Jer. 10:23). God is the infinite Economist who called him into existence because there was a task waiting for him. What is that task? To miss it will involve him in endless disappointment. Men may suggest, but at best they are but guessing. Christ alone can rightly direct him. Thus *counselling* becomes a vital feature in the Senior's season of prayer.

6. Unless there is *response* to the worshipper's outgoings to God, the Senior will not continue his devotional practices. We don't continue speaking to one who never speaks to us. But God is ready and willing to respond if He is given a chance. Hurried prayer, formal sentences, or insincere expression can bring no answer. The seeking soul does find a seeking God; or rather is found of God. And when this happens, the highest factors of prayer require employment, namely praise and adoration. Love and thanksgiving are the motives of it. Terms of endearment are requisitioned from every available source to afford expression.

7. There is in true worship an *inflowing of divine grace*

and power. The Senior who prays arises to meet the requirements of life with augmented strength of mind and body. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isa. 40:31). The supreme purpose of prayer is that divine gift of the Spirit with which the worshipper is enabled to go out and live the life and do the works of God.

Individual Aspects

No intimate relationships can be analyzed without incurring danger of undue exposure and representations which the unsympathetic do not understand. The friendship between God and man has meaning to the true worshipper such as can never appeal to those who have not tasted that friendship. Even one friend of God cannot completely enter into the friendship another enjoys with God. Just as each spectator sees a different rainbow, so each worshipper gains a different aspect of God. In accordance with that individual view of God each should express himself in prayer. The Senior needs ways of expression differing from those of the Intermediate, and of the oldest adolescent. To a degree the second year Senior needs vehicles of lighter build than those of the third year Senior. One's worship must always reflect one's experience.

Peculiar Emphases

Each act of worship requires its peculiar emphasis. At one time thankfulness, at another confession, at a third need of divine wisdom, again a telling of plans, or adoration; these and many other items should in turn enjoy prominence in a prayer, and in a complete worship program. It were folly to attempt the arraying of every conceivable element of worship in a single prayer, or even in a devotional session. There is call for careful selection, so that those factors that stand out chiefly at that particular time, or

that should so stand out, are centres of interest in that season of worship.

Popular Misunderstandings of Worship

1. *Prayer as petition only.* To the majority of Christians the thought of prayer seems impossible without including some request from God. Human friendships could hardly thrive amid such conditions; yet the unthinking would brand this highest form of friendship with the mark of human-centred interests. It is true that in much of our worship petition plays a part, because we and those in whom we are interested are needy and sinful. Not seldom, too, our petitions are spiritual; they express our longing for holiness and truer friendship with God; which is not a selfish longing. Yet, many great prayers of the Bible contain not a single petition; they purely express the overflowing thought of the soul to the Spirit.

2. *Obligating God.* The Hebrews of Isaiah's time, likewise those to whom Amos, Micah and Ezekiel brought God's warning messages, believed that the bringing of sacrifices put the Almighty under obligation to them. They gave God something; now He ought to reward them with interest. The Jews in the days of Jesus were of similar opinion. Gradually, the Christian Church drifted into the same error which culminated in the sales of indulgences,—upon which the Reformation broke out. That evil notion is not dead today. Moral living; contributing to benevolent enterprises; supporting the church; working in slums and missions, these constitute activities from which divine returns may be expected, some believe. God owes them blessings for reward. As if they did not owe God every ounce of strength and every living moment. In Luke 17:7-10, Jesus corrects this error through an illustration.

3. *Making God work for us.* This subversion of prayer

is more common than may be surmised, and is likely to appeal to the Senior. He undertakes tasks for which he is scarcely prepared; he bites off more than he can chew. To have God help him out on such occasions would come very handy. He likes to pray to such a God. But the principle of it is wrong as the devil. God is not his employee; but his Employer. The almighty Friend will work *with* him by way of friendship; he will not be coerced to work *for* him. God is our goal, not our instrument or our means to reach an end. Our Scriptures contain the story of Hophni and Phineas, the sons of Eli, who carried the Ark of the Covenant into the camp, planning to force God into fighting for them. The Ark was captured; they were slain (1 Sam. 4:3-11). According to the *Ethics* of Immanuel Kant, man should never be made a *means* of another man, but always be considered worthy of one's *purpose*. If this is true of man, what of making God a means and not an end?

Learning to Worship

The art of worship can be taught. When the disciples came to Jesus with the request, "Lord, teach us to pray!" Jesus did not reply, "If you are normal you have worship in your soul and you will find some way of utterance." He set Himself at teaching them to pray. His group was not any too choice. Genuine prayer had become woefully neglected by the Hebrews. Nevertheless, in less than three years He had them so well trained that they could stay together for ten days in prayer. Under reverent and sympathetic leadership our growing generation will be cultured in worship.

The Senior is becoming qualified to worship God in spirit and in truth, for he knows much about friendship and, as we saw, the same elements inhere in worship. As a friend, he is quite immature, but he means well and his powers for

friendship are growing stronger every day; so may his powers for worship. The Senior knows something about love. It may as well be confessed that as a lover he is volatile; so is his love for Christ not encouragingly steady. But shortly he will become a "steady" in his love affairs; the same may happen in his religious life. The Senior knows how to talk in endearing terms to his "sweety," and frequently overdoes the exercise. He is able to talk to the heavenly Father,—witness the prayers we quoted in a previous chapter; witness our own experiences with them; our own prayer-life in youth.

There is a germ of reverence in every growing soul. A careless lad heard the story of the crown of thorns pressed on the brow of Jesus. The man who told the story showed just such a thorn-crown to the group. After others had left, this lad still lingered. Assured that our Lord suffered that pain and humiliation, he asked permission to touch it; then walked away with worship in his eyes.

Connected with the Bridewell Prison in Chicago, there has been for years the John Worthy School, for juvenile delinquents. At bed-time when these "Demons of the streets" are about to retire, they are told to kneel by their cots for a minute or so. There they bow their heads, row on row of them in white gowns, suggesting the pictures we know of the angels of God. When the signal is given for getting under the blankets, here a lad and there one lingers for a moment. He is not quite through talking to God. The spirit of worship is there at least in germ. Had it been rightly fostered, those boys might have been saved that great humiliation of the Bridewell Prison.

"O Lord, who knowest our peculiar temptations, help us by the Holy Spirit to struggle against them. Save us from being ashamed of Thee and of our duty. Give us grace never to approve what our conscience tells us is wrong, but

to reprove it by word or silence. Let us never act the part of tempter to others and never place a stumbling-block in our brother's way, or offend any of our companions. For Jesus' sake. Amen."—*Alexander Devine*.

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. It is alleged that half our Christian young people do not pray privately, even before retiring. Can reports be made on this?
2. Do those youths who observe evening prayer seem to be in earnest about it, or is it apparently routine?
3. What was our own reaction as young people to group worship in Sunday school, society, and church?
4. Why is the majority of the young people absent from the morning service of the church?
5. Compare the friendship of the disciples with Jesus and their subsequent worship of Him, with Lewis Browne's definition of worship as superstition and sprung from fear. Assign to a student the first chapter of Browne's *This Believing World* for review.
6. With the suggestions of friendship elements for a basis, trace hindrances and helps to genuine worship.
7. Encourage expression from the group of what they expect God to do for them. Have one prepare a report on Psalms eight, and twenty-three, to see whether they contain petitions; another review the incident of Hophni and Phineas.
8. There may be members of the class who have discontinued praying, when some petition seemed to remain unanswered. Secure reaction from them if possible.
9. Have some write out a group prayer through which the adolescent of a given age might express himself and the aspirations of his companions.

REFERENCES: *Youth and the Church*, Maus, Ch. III. *A Students' Philosophy of Religion*, Wright, Ch. IV. "Lord, Teach Us to Pray!" Whyte. *Devotional Leadership*, Verkuy, Ch. IX.

III

PRIVATE WORSHIP

THE genius of all worship is social; for in it one reasonable being seeks communion with another. This was the only social element that remained in the life of the religious hermit. Eliminating himself from every human being, he could not eliminate himself from God. And it was the one redeeming feature of his unnatural existence.

Where God is thought of as impersonal, even this last vestige of fellowship must be abandoned. The Brahman who in his solitude says, "Atman," that is, "I am he," misses the social experience of worship, for he cannot look beyond himself to God. The Christian Scientist, if he were honest with himself and fully understood the basis of his religion, would sense the same loneliness. Deity to him is impersonal; himself is part of it. His worship is a sort of spiritual inbreeding and inlooking; its chief joy is admiration of and satisfaction with self. According to terms with which we have grown familiar, these impersonal and self-interesting acts do not come under the category of worship.

The Christian worshipper bows before *a divine Person*, who can, is, and will be his Friend. In the truest sense such worship cannot, therefore, be individualistic; but it can be and often should be private. Were it not for the urge first within the single heart that leads the soul in search of God, it is doubtful if group worship could have developed. Like the iceberg of which at least six-seventh is hidden under the

surface of the sea, while one-seventh shows itself, so private worship must have its first and greatest claim on man, shall group worship gain any meaning.

The Need of Private Worship

1. *Separation for sake of association.* It is a divine as well as a natural principle of life that separation precedes association and dissemination. Salt must first be crystallized, and pure from other matter, shall it serve in the cooking of food. The grain of wheat must be taken from the heap and buried in the earth by itself, shall it grow a head. Abraham is called out from his kindred, that the promise might be fulfilled, "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2). The Hebrews were settled in Canaan by themselves, that they might carry Jehovah's blessing to the whole world. The very name of the Christian Church is "Ecclesia," that is, "called out," because only as an organization differing from a godless world in form, in principles, and in practice, can the Church fulfil her divine function of remaking the world. "The Kingdom of heaven shall be like unto a leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:21).

What is true of the Church is even more basically true of the individual. Jesus went apart to pray; He spent His vigils on the mountain and among the trees. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret" (Matt. 6:6), He admonished His disciples. The worshipper must get by himself to gather strength, so that presently he shall be able to withstand temptation, to overcome evil with good, and to impart courage to others.

2. *Personal adjustment to environment.* Each individual has traits, powers, tendencies and points of view that render

him different from others. His tasks, therefore, will differ. His needs are not exactly the same. With many hopes and aspirations shared among the group, there remain also those personal desires, ambitions and attitudes that could not be familiar to others. One needs to get by himself to sense his true relationships, to correct deviations from the path on which he knows he ought to walk; to hear the voice that calls him personally. God sent each of us into the world to bear His message of a kind and in a way which has been committed to no other. Through each of us He plans to express Himself. But inasmuch as His ways are infinite, even the millions of people, if all obeyed His voice, could not perfectly bring that message. How much less if few obey Him and those few should fail to secure personal contact with Him!

3. *Meditation.* If ever there was need of quiet thinking, it is now. "The world rushes on." Meditation is an obsolete word to most. But this renders it not less needful. Questions arise, especially at high school age, that demand personal answers. Why was I born? What have I done to make myself worth while? Why am I liked or disliked? What is God's thought of me? Am I, as a rule, seeking my own advantage, or do I think of others? If Jesus is my Redeemer, what am I doing for Him? Some of my companions do not know Him. Can I bring them to Him? How shall I make Christ attractive to them? And what should I chiefly do in the world? These and a thousand further questions crowd in upon the Senior's meditative mind. If that mind is prayerful, such questions are looked at with God in view; they are put in their right perspective.

Answers to such questions may be received by mastering the principles of God's Word, by direct communication with the divine Spirit, and by going out into willing service. "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13), and "He

that willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching " (John 7:17). The only requirements are that the heart be opened toward heaven; that there be room in the heart for the Holy Spirit, and that the mind be so attuned that the Spirit of God is welcome. Purpose of sin, and communion with God never dwell together.

Our physical make-up renders periodic meditation on the unseen world absolutely necessary shall we live as spiritual beings. During every waking moment, and even while we sleep, the visible, tangible world clamours for entrance to the soul through our senses. We cannot keep out noises, smells, sights, contacts and tastes. And because they are so continuous and pressing, we naturally surmise that the things which are seen are eternal and the things which are not seen only temporal; which is the reverse of God's teachings. The quiet moment of private prayer brings us back. Nothing else can do it. Our life depends upon its practice.

4. *Inflow of life.* Whatever group-worship may mean,—and in the next chapter we shall consider its great value,—private worship means knitting the heart to God's heart. Recently in Illinois twins were born with but one throbbing heart between them. As soon as the cord was severed, that bound the two babes together, one of them died. Its life was utterly dependent on the blood-infusion of the other; but there was sufficient blood and circulation for but one child; the one could not perpetually sustain the other. When we lift up our hearts in worship to the Father, His life streams into us. But with Him resources are infinite; He can and will perpetually infuse His life into our life,—if we give Him a chance. The period of meditation is that divine opportunity.

At such a time we can tell God what we could never talk over with others; He knows (Psa. 139). We can safely promise God what we could not promise others and might

not dare promise Him in the presence of others; He strengthens (Phil. 4:13). We must lay our plans before Him; He has our program (Acts 15:28). We unite our interests with His; He is our Leader (Matt. 6:33). We can tell Him freely all our mistakes and start over again; He sympathizes (John 21:17). —

5. *Co-ordinating our own powers.* In the long ago a man of God prayed, "Unite my heart to fear thy name" (Psa. 86:11). Modern psychology enables us to sense the deep meaning of that prayer. We need co-ordination of our own powers. So often we are not in perfect harmony with ourselves, but like an instrument out of tune so we emit false notes. The sense of unity with God is the surest remedy for this unhappy situation. His love alone is able to unite our heart. If high school students knew that secret, there would be fewer nervous breakdowns in their ranks. Private worship can be their healing balm.

6. *Being intimate with God.* Start with yourself and see how many items you need talk over with God alone that cannot be mentioned in the group. Personal disappointments, desires, aspirations, that would not interest the group, or might provoke their mirth. Personal weaknesses that need confession before God, but not before others. Thanksgivings for gifts to us, the meaning of which none else could estimate.

Equally private are some of our prayers for others. When John's behaviour has disappointed me, shall I pray for him in the group? After I have discovered that Henry is slipping into vicious habits, shall I betray him by telling others of it? Almost every intercessory petition for an individual needs to be offered in private; though sometimes an inner circle can make such the centre of their petitions.

7. *Preparing for group worship.* Out of the private room the worshipper may go forth confidently, either to lead the

group in prayer or to participate. Some of the centres of private interest can be shared in the meeting; others may be silently remembered. The chief contribution of the private worshipper to group worship is his prayer spirit. He is in the mood of visiting with God. Under favourable circumstances his attitude grows contagious. Were it true of all members of the group that they had come from the intimate presence of God, the group session would be fully assured of divine comradeship. For Jesus could then fulfil His promise, "Where two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

†Prof. Whitehead, in *Religion in the Making*, says, "Religion is what the individual does with his solitariness. . . . If you are never solitary you are never religious."

Times for Private Worship

When is an adolescent's most likely time for devotions? Many think they have no room for devotional practice whatever. With them we need to budget time. Twenty-four hours are allotted to each of us. Time is needed for sleep. How much? For recitation and study, if one attends school; for labour if one works for wages. How many hours? Eating, rest, and recreation require some time. How long? What is left? Settle on the right portion and season of the day. Let leaders as nearly as possible observe devotions personally at a time of day agreed on by most students in the group. There will be little joy in joint devotion without sufficient private devotion.

1. *Mornings.* We face the day with its problems and exactions. What might naturally be the substance of a working boy's prayer in the morning? A high school boy's? A working girl's? A high school girl's? Work out these items. Remember, the day is full of opportunities, and there are also many temptations beckoning.

2. *Evenings.* We are back from a full day. Let us review it as we think God witnessed us. The twilight season has always been such an advantageous time for further acquaintance with God. Innocent man then walked with Him in the Garden. Isaac meditated at eventide. Jesus stood in the twilight at the entrance of the city and they brought him their sick. Read at this point the hymn, "At Even When the Sun Had Set," and see what it means to yourself and to your group.

Evening is a good time for smoothing out wrinkles that came into life through the day,—bickerings, annoyances, loss of temper, white or black lies. Venders of cloth, who daily carry on their backs great packs of goods, take out every piece at night and smooth it on a table. After wrinkles have set, the goods are no longer salable. There is also the night before us during which we cannot control our thoughts. The worshipping youth has in the daytime suppressed many suggestions that came to him from within or from without. According to some, our dreams are but reactions of those suppressed suggestions. How needful for youth to start sleep with God in his thought, and with all the purity for which Jesus is loved and honoured!

3. *Sundays.* Not the entire Sabbath is to be spent in public worship. No normal youth would do so if he could. But the day is specially God's own, and every normal worshipper does well to set aside some definite time each Sabbath to be alone with God. His mind is free from studies or from daily burdens of employment. God has set him free this day, supremely that fellowship with Him may be enjoyed. What unique occasion for silences on a quiet Sabbath day! No modern secularization of the Lord's Day must rob us of that birthright.

4. *Vacation time.* God planned vacation time for every human being. Joseph and Mary, taking the boy Jesus to

Jerusalem for a week, followed a God-instituted custom. Elkanah and Hannah, the parents of Samuel, enjoyed similar vacations a millennium earlier. Body and soul need this more prolonged rest and recreation. The sense of the presence of God; the inflowing of His power,—these furnish strength to wearied limbs and food to a hungry soul.

Accentuations of time set apart for worship do glorify existence; they serve to permeate all life with the presence of God. In observing them, length of time is not equally important with the right use of it. It is good, nevertheless, to carry out the admonition of the hymn, "Take Time to Be Holy." For if we neglect private devotions, our whole spiritual life deteriorates.

Ways of Private Worship

Have you recently reviewed your personal prayers? Were the phrases you used last night quite different from those you employed night before? Or have you been reiterating essentially the same ideas and words? That would mean that you have gotten into a rut. Without intending to do so, you have constructed a formula, much after the manner of pagan priests, to serve you as a ritual that is handy for repetition. Is it not time to free yourself from this bondage?

This is equally true of our adolescents. Thanksgiving for health, for divine care during the day, for friends and loved ones; petition for restful sleep and strength against a coming day; confession of imperfection, with prayer for forgiveness,—these constitute the usual items of private prayer. Naturally, but not wholesomely.

✧ *Most prayers are too general*; they fail to reach down into life as it is lived moment by moment. Every act and experience needs to be sensed in immediate relation with God. That conversation with John, a complicated translation in

Latin, Margaret's misunderstanding, the class party, the job we want, the task we hardly know how to accomplish, these things make up much of life. With them we are greatly concerned and with such our Father is concerned. The customary phrases we use, cover such items in too general a way, not vitally. It is well to avoid for a while all sentences that have attached themselves to our season of worship through long usage; so that we may gain fresh views of life and God, related so intimately. Which is true also of our use and abuse of The Lord's Prayer.

It will help us to obtain the new impulse we need in prayer if we learn to direct our thoughts:

1. *To God as almighty, all-good and all-wise.* Neither of these attributes is by itself fully satisfying; but together they suffice us.

2. *To Christ as our Redeemer, our Friend and our elder Brother,* whose life was perfect for us to follow and whose death and victory give us power to be true to Him, because His presence is ever with us.

3. *To the Holy Spirit,* at all times ready to speak to our hearts if we will listen, illuminating our minds, and even helping us to pray.

4. *To the Word of God* as bringing us the personal experiences and thoughts of godly men and women through the ages,—their hopes, their disappointments, their errors, and their fervent prayers. Supreme are the sayings of Jesus and the teachings of His disciples. God speaks to our hearts when we peruse the Bible. Have we learned to listen?

5. *To our own dedication of life.* Are we enjoying divine friendship more now than a year ago, or are we standing still? God warned His people against the graven image. But if God does not mean more to us as we grow, then we are making a graven image of Him. With all our heart and mind and strength we are asked to love Him. In modern

language this involves all our intellectual, emotional and volitional powers.

Materials for Private Worship

Words are vehicles for thoughts. Occasionally, we have feelings too great for verbal expression; but as frequently is that inability due to lack of language as to greatness of thought. We need to enrich our language, shall we give choice expression to our loftiest ideas. This should begin early in life and continue to the end. The little child that has mastered but half a dozen words is thinking much more than it is saying. It snatches every syllable that comes within the range of understanding and lingual power, so that more thoughts may be expressed. Adolescents have similar experiences. With the urge and development of reason they have more ideas than language to express ideas; hence their resort to slang. If the adolescent develops normally in spiritual experiences, he will find himself lacking in language to express himself adequately toward and about God. Either he must find such language, or make it, else the feeling that called for worship-expression is doomed to dwindle; which would be an immeasurable calamity. Nor can we calculate the labours necessary to recover what is thus lost. Certainly, a leading reason for feeble devotional participation on the part of adolescents is their failure to master language suitable for devotional expression. Which means in turn that we have failed to give them proper training. Where shall we find materials?

1. *In our daily conversations.* Because religion and life are one, worship expression should first of all arise out of common thoughts and experiences. The interests that engross the high school student and the young wage-earner are either illegitimate and out of place, or they range themselves in the sphere of worship. Exceptional help may be given

the Senior in the smaller group, such as a Sunday school class. Words just used by a pupil or by the teacher may be used presently as prayer. Let us think of Miriam who, as a girl not more than thirteen, worked so fully in harmony with her mother Jochebed that she became the means of saving her brother Moses. Then, how natural, in the midst of the lesson, to have all bow the head for the prayer, "O God, help us to confide in our parents in all our plans"! Or if the lesson were of a negative type, like that of the rich young ruler, a brief, informal prayer might be, "Our Saviour, Christ, give us grace to make the right decision." Enough to show the inherent naturalness of prayer. Not seldom such informal prayer should be followed, though perhaps later on, with suggestion that every interest of life appeals to God to whom we confidently bring each interest when we are alone with Him.

— 2. *Thoughts that arise in our hearts toward God* when alone should often be written down for further use. Had we written our prayers more frequently, we could scarcely have fallen into the repetitions of which we have been guilty. Instead, the thoughts thus written would form seeds for further prayer material, increasing freshness in worship. There is in most prayers too great indulgence in repetitions, precisely because there has been no forethought. The *writing out of a prayer insures* such forethought. It also helps us to relate experiences definitely to Him whom we worship. A review of them, as written out, shows what interests of life we have constantly brought before God and which we have allowed to sink as if God were not concerned with them. It further aids us to guard ourselves in the use of pious phrases that have lost their vital meaning, and to create new ways of expression which we need so greatly. Unless our worship is creative and progressive, it inevitably flattens, and we deceive ourselves with sham.

Now and then we ought to *pray audibly in private* to become and remain accustomed to our own voice in prayer. Much hesitancy in public worship is due to the habit of silent prayer whenever we are alone. It disturbs the thinking of most worshippers to hear their own voice in the act of prayer. Perhaps this is partly due also to the modern deficiency in religious conversation, whereby worship interests are so completely kept apart from daily activities. In any event, audible prayer in private helps greatly later on in public prayer, and immediately in clarifying our most sacred thoughts.

✓3. *The earnest prayers of others* in our group provide materials for our worship. When another truly prays, he is giving vent to his most sacred thoughts in the most suitable language he is able to supply. His words are means of expressing his holiest emotions. To us they are suggestive both of the feelings that may be ours if we live and think aright, and of the manner in which we may convey such feelings,—not parrot-like, but out of a heart that seeks divine contact. The prayer we hear is likely to show us where we lack self-knowledge and appreciation of God's ways.

4. *Written prayers.* The prayers of others that have been preserved for our use may or may not have sprung spontaneously from the hearts of those who gave them to us. They will be none the worse, we are agreed, for being premeditated. Later we shall have a whole chapter on such-like materials. Suffice it now to observe briefly the phrasing and the spirit of a few written prayers. To be worthy of our study they should help us by their devotional thought as well as by their choice expression.

a. *Bible prayers.* Almost invariably worshippers, immortalized in Scripture, prayed for others. Abraham, Moses, Nehemiah, Daniel, Paul, these outstanding men

pleaded with God on behalf of friends, their people, their churches. No doubt they came to God also with petitions for themselves, but there is no record of them; except with their people in view. Moses wanted to see God; Nehemiah asked for grace in the sight of his king; Daniel prayed for wisdom; Paul for healing; but their lives were merged with the interests of those they served, and that meant the furtherance of the kingdom of God. To catch their spirit means to gain a taste for intercessory prayer.

Whole passages can be used as private prayers just as they stand, Psalms 8, 25, 51, 139, all prayed in the first person singular. Others, equally personal, are part testimony and part prayer,—Psalms 19, 23, 42, 84, 116. Many Psalms are testimony concerning God, but may readily be used as prayer by altering the pronoun. For instance, Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength," which is testimony, but as "Thou, Lord, art our refuge and strength," becomes real prayer. If students will transpose this entire Psalm into prayer and learn to use it, also those parts of the 19th, the 23d, and 116th that are now testimony, it will greatly enrich their worship vocabulary.

We may measure our souls somewhat by our ability to vent our feelings through such sayings. Are they too advanced for the Senior? Because the world's oldest literature springs from the youngest race experiences, much of the worship material of the Bible is naturally suitable for adolescent use.

b. Prayers of Christian people. Frequent perusal of a Book of Prayers, ancient or modern, enriches the prayer vocabulary and even enlarges the scope of prayerful thinking. Some might be used verbally by an adolescent, while others could be readily adopted. From one Prayer Book we quote, "O God, most holy, wise, and powerful, Preserver and Governor of all Thy creatures and all their actions,

keep us, we beseech Thee, in health of body and soundness of mind, in purity of heart and cheerfulness of spirit; in contentment with our lot and charity with our neighbour. And further all our lawful undertakings with Thy blessing. In our labour strengthen us. In our pleasure purify us. In our difficulties direct us. In our perils defend us. In our troubles comfort us. And supply all our needs according to the riches of Thy grace in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen." Simpler and fewer expressions might suit the adolescent better. When alone he would employ the first personal pronoun. But the sentiment of such a prayer, surely, is not strange to youth.

Elsewhere we find, "Lord, these things I would do: Succeed, live well, laugh often, love much, gain the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; leave the world a bit better than I found it. May I never lack appreciation of the beauty about me, or fail to express it, and always look for the best in others, and give to others the best I have in me. That thus in some sense my life may be an inspiration and my memory a benediction."

The aspiration of such a prayer seems to well right from the heart of youth. In another Prayer Book we read this: "O Lord, my divine Helper, as I go out into life with its pleasures, its opportunities, and its pitfalls, I earnestly ask of Thee for sufficient strength at every turn. Enable me with a willing heart to render Thee service. From every degrading thought cleanse my mind, and help me to centre my ambitions on the purposes which Thou hast shown, O Father, in Thy Son Jesus Christ." On our part may we contribute this: "I thank Thee, Lord and Saviour, for health and all the wholesome things of life; for they are Thy gifts. Strengthen my will, I pray Thee, to present my body to Thee, a living sacrifice. Cleanse me, O God, from every thought and deed that would not honour Thee. Then shall

I be pure and true, as Thou hast planned me. I ask it in the name of Jesus, my great Helper."

A group of young people connected with the Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, composed this prayer, to be used during one month. It is therefore a group prayer; but with change of number in pronoun would prove helpful in private devotions: "O God, the King of Men and Lord of Youth, may Jesus, our Master, walk with us all the way, helping us, by His grace, to clean-minded and pure-hearted living. Make us to hate each sin but never judge the sinner. Help us to see all that is brave and true in every life, being merciful with one another, even as we hope in Thy mercy for ourselves. Show us the beauty all around us lying; make us to rejoice and be glad in it because it comes from Thee.

"Help us, our Father, to join in the fight for all high and holy things and to continue steadfastly in the same till our life's end. If we love not our brother whom we have seen, how shall we love Thee whom we have not seen? Hear us in this our prayer, and bring us to our beds this night weary and content and undishonoured. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

c. Many *great hymns* reach down deep into the heart so that they serve in private worship to express our feelings and attitude toward the Father. To convey the devotional thoughts of adolescence, hymns of trust, aspiration and consecration are most fervently loved and most helpfully used. When in their departments hymns are requested, it may mean that such vehicles of worship have already meant something in the growing life.

Suggestions of Jesus for Right Worship

1. Jesus teaches *we must know God*, shall we enjoy life eternal. Without such intimate acquaintance we are not alive. Our words will be as dead as our souls. We must

know God, not from hearsay but from personal experience, as our Friend (John 17:3).

2. Jesus states that we must *worship the Father in spirit and in truth*. Many in His day were worshipping an imaginary God, whom they had concocted for their own use; a God who loved the Hebrews but was little concerned with the rest of the world; who was pleased with offerings of rams and bullocks more than with surrendered lives. Jesus taught a Father who looked at man as an immortal soul, the unseen self communing with the unseen God (John 4:23, 24).

3. Jesus demands *repentance from sin, and confession*. He does not flatter any one. There must be genuine sorrow for having grieved a loving Father; then the Father is ready to forgive, and broken relationships are restored. But without repentance and subsequent restoration of goodwill toward God, worship is not possible in human life (Matt. 4:17; Luke 15:21).

4. Jesus insists that *repentance does not suffice toward God, if grudges remain with others*. No debts can be divinely forgiven without a forgiving spirit toward our fellow-men. Should we find ourselves at the altar, ready to offer sacrifice to God, and remember misunderstandings toward a brother, we must leave that gift and reconcile ourselves with him whom we have hurt, or who has hurt us. Else, prayer cannot ascend to God (Matt. 6:15; 5:23, 24).

5. Jesus makes it clear that *to pray we must work*. Should we ask God that His kingdom might come, while we fail to help in the bringing of it, then we are hypocrites, indeed. Or if we pray that His will be done, but we are following our own sweet will, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Only as participants in God's programme can we have converse with Him in prayer. The Lord's Prayer makes this sufficiently clear.

6. In the prayers of Jesus thanksgiving forms the key-

note. Whether in the breaking of bread or by the grave of Lazarus; whether teaching the Galilean fishermen or healing the lad for which their faith proved too small, Jesus talks to God in terms of gladness because the Father hears. To Him the conversation itself has greater meaning than results that may accrue from it. This is the keynote also of the most uplifting prayers of the Old Testament. Such Psalms as the 100th and the 23d have no petition in them. They are songs of trust and gladness just because God is, and because of what He is. What does the Lord require for prayer, but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with Him? (Micah 6:8).

*"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take!
We kneel and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!*

*"Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong—
That we are sometimes overborne with care—
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled—when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"*

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Without divine personality would communication with God be out of the question? Our Christian Science friends try to harmonize these contradictions somehow. Give it an airing. Where does friendship come in? The report on Browne's chapter should be in place here.
2. Consider differences and similarities between introspection and private worship.
3. What advantages has private worship over group worship, both for the individual and for the group? What disadvantages?

4. Whitehead's assertion deserves unbiassed discussion.
5. Virtues and dangers of stated times for devotions. Testimony from experience. If Freud's theory of the origin of dreams were true, would it enhance or lower the value of evening prayer?
6. In how far is the Lord's Day for recreation? In what sense?
7. If Ignatius Loyola's *Exercises* are securable, have a student review them and bring in report.
8. Elicit from the class their dominant prayer interests and write them on the blackboard, to be copied in the notebooks. Compare with these the prayer interests of Psalms eight and twenty-three as reported. The incidents of Hophni and Phineas may also be brought in at this time.
9. What difficulties have been encountered militating against sincere praying?
10. Assign to three students the reading of helpful prayers in the Bible and report on them, one from the Psalms, another from the Gospels, a third from Genesis and Nehemiah.

REFERENCES: *Essentials of Prayer*, Bounds, Ch. I. *Womanhood in the Making*, Eggleston, Ch. IV. *The Psychology of Prayer*, Stolz.

IV

WORSHIP IN THE GROUP

THE virtue of private worship is readily admitted; although the admission may be more so in theory than in practice. Most Christians believe and some know that quiet moments spent for the avowed purpose of fellowship with the Eternal are exceedingly beneficial. But the need of group worship is not equally apparent to all. This feeling is due largely to lack of beneficent experience. One may have felt the presence of God come down like dews from heaven in the quiet hour of meditation; but never among the larger group, except, perhaps, in church. Whoever has witnessed the customary gathering of Sunday school members and their behaviour during "Opening Exercises," or at a Young People's Meeting, has probably come away with the conviction that whatever other purpose the meeting served, it was not a means of sensing the presence of God. It need not surprise us that after repeated experiences of that type, young people show small interest in the early session of the Sunday school, and see little value in the songs and pseudo-prayers of the Society. Unless there is true worship, we should not ask them to devote time to such meetings. But it is ours rather to work for genuine lifting of human hearts to God, and to accomplish this no effort can be too great. Naturally, the question arises, Why should we conduct group worship?

Group worship is no novel invention. From time immemorial worshipping people have felt unsatisfied with

their solitary devotions and have grouped for further expression of their attitude toward God. Even during the wilderness wanderings of the Hebrews, Moses had a tent erected and carried from place to place in which worshippers could meet for their devotions. Throughout the history of Israel a central spot was designated, to which devotees regularly resorted at least once a year for national worship. Jesus promised His presence where but two or three might gather. The apostles met for worship. During the most severe persecutions, both by the Roman authorities during the first three centuries of the Christian era, and by the Church of Rome in Reformation times, those who sought the Lord, frequented meeting places, dangerous though such insistence remained because of spies. It is safe to assert that if today every house of worship were closed and every Christian gathering disbanded, groups of worshippers would form again wherever Christ is known. For worship is essentially social; it goes out to God and it fosters the highest fellowship of spirit between man and man. When Jesus taught us "*Our Father*" He recognized that holy, human trait.

Advantages of Group Worship

1. Group worship serves to answer *the social urge*, the love to neighbour, which is like to love of God. United prayer unites the worshippers. Joint Scripture reading fosters harmony. Co-operative singing both expresses and enhances that inclusive feeling. Each singer sustains the other. Under adequate leadership our high school age can be the strongest group for sacred song, for the public schools are greatly aiding us by teaching music-reading. No longer do the boys wander uncertainly between soprano and contralto; they are finding their voice. Of course, the Church must contribute her part in the training.

2. The *give-and-take of audible prayer and testimony*

offers in itself a mode of training and a source of inspiration. Those who sincerely worship, reveal their own souls to their comrades as may rarely happen in any other way. The members of the group learn to understand each other. The solitary worshipper is likely to misjudge the motives of those whom he never meets. Prayer is a leveler, and a distributor. The purest form of democracy is attained where high and low bow jointly before a common Lord. Each supplements the other and all look up to him who alone is able to supply their similar and their varied needs.

3. Group worship should ensue in *definite planning of Christian work*. Not the crying of, "Lord, Lord," but the doing of His will is pleasing to God. Worship meetings that *end* with worship are empty and inane; they run invariably into mockery, or rioting, or mechanism. Divine life cannot abide in members that are inactive; those who gather for worship must have the Kingdom of God at heart, first, last and always. Their prayers will centre on the need of Christ within and around them, the work they may do for Him, and the help He can supply for its accomplishment. This will not cover up their personal needs of purity and grace; but rather accentuate them; for not till we have applied our powers, are we aware of our imperfections. Programme and prayer are as essential to each other as are living and learning.

4. Group worship may help to carry out *the missionary principles of Christ*. It is His plan that His children shall attract those not yet following Him. "Behold, how they love one another," witnessed the Jews who observed the earlier disciples in Jerusalem. They saw something in Christians which they personally missed, and wanted. Daily, outsiders came streaming in, drawn by the spirit of those worshipping brethren. This does not happen when one prays alone. Right, social relationships convince outsiders

more deeply than fine words. Worshippers form a community in which brotherly love finds expression, shaming a backbiting world. But woe betide that group that would presume joint worship without a benevolent spirit. Not a single promise of grace applies to such.

5. Experience has convincingly taught that *the presence of Christ is vitally felt* where two or more unite in genuine prayer and praise. There is evident among such worshippers an increased sense of power flowing from the unseen world into their souls. To go forward on the Christian way, these seasons of refreshing are needful both for further experience in private worship and for united strength. God made us not on the sand-heap plan, but on the fruit-tree plan. Each member sustains each other member. The figure of Christ's own body most truly presents the mutual relationships of worshippers; together we form the body of which Jesus is the head. Separation from each other means separation also from Him.

Aims of a Group in Worship

That our worship may be as Jesus requires it, with the whole head, the whole heart, and the whole will, there should be a definite aim in the mind of the leader, and presently in the mind of the group, for each worship service. To reach that aim most surely, the group itself needs first to be in mind. As every person differs from every other person, so every group has characteristics that differ from those of any other group. The needs as well as the powers of each group are peculiar. The service of worship must be as near as possible according to those needs and powers within the group, together with the group's relation with a world in which they live. Our question, then, is twofold; first, what needs have we as a group? Second, what needs may this group more adequately meet beyond itself?

1. *The inquiry starts with ourselves.* Of what divine assistance stands the group in want to remain true to its Lord? What weakness is apparent in members of the group? Are there doubts arising in some hearts? Is there one on the brink of disloyalty to Christ? Has decision for life-work as yet been settled? Are certain members taking their part in church work with or without adequate preparation? What chances are there to bring the thought of Christ to an outsider? How may we best follow up such chances? Any one of these questions would fairly serve for a single aim around which the group or the leader builds the programme.

2. *The purpose of this particular session must be determined.* Suppose it is missionary, looking beyond the group, but in immediate environs. There is call for service in every community, and who will say that it is fully, gladly met! What virtue is there in mission-study from a textbook without a study of the neighbourhood? Having determined what needs are to be met and what the group can do about it, the matter will naturally become a subject of prayer. Some have already conversed on the subject with God privately. The need of divine wisdom and courage is obvious to all. A live, earnest, truly inspiring worship service may then confidently be expected.

Much mission work lies beyond immediate environs, in the home land and abroad. The Kingdom of our Father should stretch "from sea to sea and from the rivers even to the ends of the earth." To us has been committed the task of making a loving Father known to all His children. First we need to know what conditions exist, how much has been achieved, where darkness still is reigning, what forces are opposing. The evangelistic, medical, and educational phases of the work should in some degree be understood. Usually, for the subject of prayer one particular field or even one

worker might helpfully be chosen. "O God, we pray Thee particularly for all the world!" said a classmate of mine in college days. His prayer ranged rather wide to be particular. Far better that we interest ourselves in a definite section of the great work at a time. But it is hard to have sympathy for what we do not know. Mission study, mission giving, and mission work should accompany mission prayer, to identify us with Kingdom interests.

3. The principles here suggested are true for every subject of worship; *we pray for what we plan and do*. Our group of high school age wonders about the future. What are they planning to do and be? God has a gracious purpose for them; but many Seniors do not know and cannot fully know. They need to grow acquainted with the world's need and with themselves, their powers and opportunities, facing that need. Again, this shows necessity of study as well as of prayer. Textbooks, or abstracts from them, may be discussed by the group; Christian men and women may address them. Each member of the group is wise to undertake certain employments whereby a taste is afforded of various callings.

4. *Evangelistic service* should not be wholly strange to young Christians. This, too, may first be studied theoretically and practically, then be made the subject of united prayer. There is also the giving of thanks to God, for success in work for Him, which might form the central thought of many a worship service. Sufficient to make clear that every season of worship requires definite purpose, without which there can be no abiding vitality.

5. The purpose of a single meeting should usually be *a link in a series of aims* that lead to a definite climax. The subjects suggested above demand considerable thought; they cover wide ranges if we go into them thoroughly. With serious study of conditions, the practice of theories pre-

sented, and wholehearted support of efforts involved, one session of worship will rarely suffice for one subject. Great themes, such as Missions, Life Choice, Personal Evangelism, Consecration, Christian Leadership, Loyalty, The Prayer Life, need to be broken up into their various phases, whereby progressively they can be thought out, lived out, and prayed out. The leader, then, in preparing the programme for each meeting, will ask himself what aim should be reached at this particular session, what larger aim it should help to achieve, and what steps toward that larger purpose are to be taken at each separate session.

No group of worshippers can most helpfully be thought of as a Sunday school group only, as a society only, a Week-day Club only, or as church attendants only; but as interested in all these and being trained in the church school through all these agencies unitedly. To this end worship plans must be correlated between the various organizations in which the participant moves. A chapter will be devoted to this study.

By-Products of Group Worship

Woodrow Wilson, in one of his addresses to the Princeton students, remarked, "Character is a by-product." For this he was severely criticized by those who did not fully understand him and failed to follow him through. He showed the folly of striving for development of character as a task by itself; because only through interests beyond self can character be wholesomely developed. Jesus announced the same principle when He warned, "He that seeketh his life shall lose it," and promised, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." This is equally true of our purpose in worship. Should we seek spiritual development through group meetings as in themselves spiritual exercises, we are doomed to miss the mark. Our aims must be interwoven with activi-

ties, out of which greater aims will grow. Prayer must arise from hearts that need God's presence to fulfil His purpose. Not "Looking unto soul growth," as Unity and Christian Science teach, but, "Looking unto Jesus," is the secret of religious advance and power. The richest results of group worship are by-products for which directly the leader is not aiming.

1. *Fostering solidarity.* The word has gained a sinister meaning through the "Industrial Workers of the World," who have made "solidarity" their slogan. They were wise in their generation. It's a good word,—too good for them to monopolize it. Solidarity is essential to Christian achievement. We gain it, we sense it, when jointly we worship with one leading aim in view. Brotherhood is established or strengthened. We link our lives together when from the heart we pray together and sing together and frankly tell each other of our aspirations, our achievements and our disappointments; when we worship in a spirit of solidarity.

2. *Co-operation for service* grows out of this feeling of solidarity. If we can pray together, we can work together under one Lord whose grace we unitedly seek. Differences and misunderstandings are cleared away; questions of first and second sink into insignificance. As brothers and sisters work together, those on the farm, these in the household, so those united by "the tie that binds our hearts in kindred love," accomplish their task, children of one Father.

3. *Loyalty to Christ and to each other* can scarcely fail to grow where hearts meet in the Master's name. "Our hopes, our fears, our aims are one." With Christ in the center, each worshipper approaching Christ does at the same time get nearer to his fellow-worshippers, for they, too, draw closer to Christ.

4. *A steadying of right choices.* We have witnessed this at every Summer Conference in which the high school age is

dominant. Delegates arrive from widely varied environments,—from farms, from villages, from cities; from factories, from schools, from homes of luxury. They meet and mingle. Every one is thinking keenly. They watch each other and the faculty. Some have not thought yet of life-choices; others have been wavering. Problems have arisen of which their fellow delegates are unaware. The worship atmosphere of the conference soon makes itself felt. From the brief period of morning worship on to that informal group meeting just before retiring, they find themselves face to face with big, soul questions. Their every act is related to the Lord of life; which means, it forms part of worship. Whether they eat or drink or whatever they do, it is not hard for them to feel they may do it to the glory of God. When they come to the close of the week, their minds have cleared, their choices are steadied; they are able to look at the life before them as a partnership with Jesus Christ.

5. *Development of personal and group prayer-life.* Every genuine meeting is "edifying;" it builds up. If there is mutual inspiration, there is also mutual instruction. Each learns from the other and each teaches the other; yet learning and teaching both go on unconsciously. Rough edges are gently polished. Choice phrases are caught that prove apt vehicles for Godward thoughts. The power to lead, and the more subtle power to follow when another leads in worship, both these are cultured in the worshipping group. We learn to think of each others' interests and needs rather than our own.

All this may be summed up in "*refinement of Christian character.*" Term that a by-product if you will; for we had not definitely sought it. But nothing is greater among men than a Christlike character. And here is the secret: Had we sought it, we could never have achieved it. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness

and all these things shall be added unto you." Our loyal prayer-group forgets self and centers on the interests of God. Some day they arise and, behold, they find God's kingdom advanced because they themselves have advanced. In the sight of God human character is greatest of His fair creation; one soul of more value than a whole physical universe. The growth of a soul is the greatest of all growth. Our supreme aim, then, is *to seek God's sovereignty acknowledged throughout His world, beginning in our hearts.*

Basic Laws of Reverent Worship

When Jesus taught us that matchless prayer, He gave us the adoration, "Hallowed be thy name." It is the opening door to God's presence. Without reverence we cannot reach God. In His own day irreverence was *the* withering sin. Jesus took the wretches by their coat-collars and ejected them from the house of God. George Adam Smith asserted, "From the Garden of Eden down, the fall of man has been due to increase of power without corresponding increase of reverence." America is noted for her power over the forces of nature; but not for her reverence.

What is reverence? If essentially it is a sense of the sacred presence of God, was John Ruskin defining it by saying, "Reverence is referring in the smallest affairs of life to God"? When Jesus taught us that God notes with tender care the falling of the sparrow; that He clothes the lily, was He inculcating reverence, or was He rendering the idea of God common? It depends much on our training whether we want Him near or not. A girl of five had a young dog. Her mother frequently warned her that when mother could not watch her, God was there to see everything she did. On one occasion, when the pup followed her from one room to another, she turned savagely on the dog, exclaiming, "Get away, you pup, it's bad enough to have God dodging behind

me all the time." What was the trouble with her training? Is that feeling prevalent?

Study, if possible, the story of King Asa and the prophet Hanani at this point (2 Chron. 16:1-9), with emphasis on verse 9. It teaches that God's eyes run to and fro in the earth "on behalf of them whose heart is perfect with him." Recall Laban's policeman-god (Gen. 31:49).

1. *Relating all of life to God.* The first principle, then, without which there can be neither reverence nor worship, is that our thoughts, our motives, our spoken words and our deeds,—which together means our whole being,—bear conscious and definite relationship to God. Our life springs from Him, our talents and our time are His, we expect still to dwell with Him even when life on earth is over; He is now and forever our Father and Lord. This seems comprehensive, but so is God comprehensive, and life with all its intricate relationships. It was the neglect of this most sacred principle of all life which led certain Jews into the sin of "making my Father's house a den of thieves." George Adam Smith must be right about the constant occasion of man's fall.

2. *Awareness of dependence on God.* It is not enough to relate life to God. The politician may so relate his life to the good citizens, that he will dominate their votes and ultimately themselves. The employer may relate his life toward employees by grinding them. Man may relate his life to God by attempting to get from him a maximum of benefits at the expense of minimum service. This, obviously, would not induce reverence. Others, again, claim they can get along without God. One Thanksgiving's Day we were entertained in the Wisconsin stumplands. The table of that pioneer was groaning under late sweet corn, turkey, cranberry, and pumpkin pie. The husband started carving, when the wife requested a Blessing. Immediately after, the

husband ejaculated, "I raised this corn, I grew these turkeys, I cleared this land. Why should we thank anybody for it!" His words sounded like blasphemy; but they conveyed the feelings of many like him. Such are the world's scavengers. And a scavenger can not develop reverence, whether he be a horse-fly, or a dog, or a human being. The scavenger dog snarls and bites. The home dog reverences man; he possesses a sense of dependence.

God made the human child dependent on others for a longer season than any other creature, that man might sense dependence. But from parents this dependence must be transferred to God. Parents in their worship show their children how they themselves in turn look up to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Thus the child's reverence for parents remains, but is glorified in reverence before God. "They that honour me I will honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30).

3. *A sense of wonder.* In Rafael's Sistine Madonna, now in the Dresden Art Gallery, the babe Jesus is so truly portrayed, looking out on the world with big, wondering eyes. He is the type of every normal child, and the father of every real grown-up. The power to wonder remains among our highest qualities. Young Franklin wondered as he strolled through Philadelphia's streets. Some thought him "green." But Franklin continued wondering and thus became our leading scientist of that day. Agassiz, the great biologist, would peer through the microscope on the scale of a fish, then with moistened eye look up toward heaven, his soul filled with wonder. Children and philosophers are alike in this; they walk in Paradise with God.

*"Joses, the brother of Jesus, was only a worker in
wood,
And never could see the vision that Jesus his brother
could;*

*For he never walked with the prophets in God's great
garden of bliss.
And of all the mistakes of the ages, the saddest
methinks is this,
To have such a brother as Jesus; to work with Him
day by day,
Yet never to catch the vision that glorified His clay."*

Naturally, wonder begins with nature: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers." The Hebrew poet, awakening in the morning and gazing at the early sky of sunrise, said, "O God, thou art very great. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment. Who stretchest out the heaven as a curtain. Who layest the beams of thy chambers in the waters. Who makest the clouds thy chariots. Who walkest upon the wings of the wind" (Psa. 104:1-3). He saw God everywhere in nature. But he did not stop there. Nature suggested to him the attributes of God, "Thy mercy is in the heavens; thy faithfulness high as the clouds; thy righteousness like great mountains; thy judgments a great deep" (Psa. 36:5, 6). And when it came to divine grace, words failed them. They could only cry, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). To us the avenues to that same deep experience of wonder before the majesty of God are offered in the book of nature, in the book of grace, and in the book of personal experience.

Shall we call the boy from the country, who gazes at shop-windows, a greenhorn? What harm is done by it?

4. *Understanding.* Edmund Burke, great British orator though he was, wrote, "It is through our lack of understanding that we have so much admiration." This may have applied to a particular case; but we cannot accept it as a universal principle. Compare with it the prayer, "Open

thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law! " (Psa. 119:18). Does understanding in scientific studies diminish the marvel of the infinite and of the infinitesimal, or does it open still wider spheres that await discovery? Does the Shepherd Psalm mean more or less when photos of Bethlehem's fields are at our disposal, with sheep, still waters, dangerous cliffs, and shepherds in charge of flocks? Can we sing "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go" more reverently by knowing the author's misfortune,—his blindness, and the breaking of his engagement due to that calamity?

Reverence is impossible without to some degree understanding God and our relationship to Him. And reverence is greatly enhanced by understanding men, communities, movements, and divine principles inherent in world activities. An understanding of God's messages to us through nature, experience, biography, history, and the recorded intercourse between God and man revealed to us in the Bible shall ever remain a basic principle of reverent worship.

5. *Trust.* Outstanding men of old walked "as seeing the Invisible." This was their glory and their salvation. They believed where they could not see or touch. Abraham followed the gleam. Moses refused the riches of Egypt. Paul gave up his career. Livingstone left home and country. Why? What was there in it for them? *They lived for God.* There is no other answer. "Underneath are the everlasting arms," said Moses at the close of his ministries. Those men "walked by faith and not by sight." They trusted God. And those men prayed. In prayer they laid foundations for our Christian civilization which no modern forces can overthrow, if we build on them. Jesus said, "Be not anxious; your Father cares." To Him we refer, Him and His ways we admire, of Him and all His works and thoughts we would know more. On Him we rely. Thus we find ourselves held

up in the arms of God. This is the essence of worship, it is the secret of reverence.

6. *Body and soul interacting.* Why is a soldier taught to stand erect? What influence has that position on his moods? Could one be brave and slouchy? Study the parable of Pharisee and publican in the temple (Luke 18:9-14). Neither could have prayed the other's prayer while assuming his own position; his words and actions would not have agreed. Had Judas, on that fateful evening, taken basin and towel, and had he stooped to wash the disciples' feet, there would have been no room in his make-up to carry out the betrayal of Christ. Eyes open during prayer; gum-chewing at a religious service; careless posture while singing, all such influences hinder the true and free expression of the soul toward our heavenly Father.

Reverence is caught more than taught. A leader who keenly senses the presence of God is certain to extend that feeling toward those whom he would bring into a reverent mood; he is contagious. But he cannot rest content until this aim is reached; his labours are vain without it. A youth one morning awoke to see the sun rise over the hills; he had been asleep in the open. He stood upon his feet, looked all about him and upward, then exclaimed, "Surely God is in this place; this is no other than the house of God." To awaken and foster that feeling is the aim of every leader in worship.

*"O God, Thy world is sweet with prayer;
The breath of Christ is in the air;
We rise on Thy free Spirit's wings,
And every thought within us sings.*

*"O God, within us and above,
Close to us in the Christ we love,
Through Him, our only Guide and Way,
May heavenly life be ours today."*

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Has the class found private or group devotions more helpful? Which group worship more than another kind?
2. Did the prayer of another ever give glimpses of the soul that prayed? Have instances cited.
3. Why are group devotions at all necessary? Let the report be given from Loyola's *Exercises*, if secured.
4. Have the relationship brought out between instruction, worship and service. A committee of three might be appointed to trace the interactions of these three in respective organizations, and to report.
5. Take a large theme, Loyalty, or Consecration, or Missions, and with the help of the class have each particularized into four or five themes.
6. Have report on Bible prayers and note their themes. As the students co-operate in analyzing they may be put on the blackboard. Watch also how instruction, worship and service interweave.
7. Submit to criticism the quotations from Wilson, Smith and Ruskin.
8. Throw open the idea of dependence in a life of worship. How did dependence on God affect the characters of William the Silent, Gustaf Adolph of Sweden, John Knox, Oliver Cromwell? Trace reasons.
9. Discuss the elements of reverence in light of student experience.
10. Assign observance and report of reverence in adolescent group worship.
11. Assign to the entire class the selection of a real or imaginary group of adolescents, then the choice of a worship theme, a Scripture passage to correspond, and four suitable hymns. Age of chosen group should be recorded on the paper.

REFERENCES: *Worship in the Sunday School*, Hartshorne, Ch. II. *Church School Administration*, Fergusson, Ch. X. *Devotional Leadership*, Verkuyl, Ch. IV.

V

THE WORSHIP PROGRAMME

THE word "programme" is derived from the Greek. The preposition "pro," means in this case "before," and the main part, "gramme," is immediately derived from the Greek verb, *Graphein*, that is, "to write." The whole word, then, carries the meaning, "something written before." Of every genuine programme this is true. And wherever nothing was written or at least prepared beforehand, there the name "programme" is out of place; the performance is not worthy of the name.

Lack of preparation is deadly at all occasions, but supremely so in worship, because the leader's own heart must be prepared, shall he secure worship in others. The unprepared leader robs himself first. He might have gained joy in lifting others to the heart of God; but that exhilarating experience is not his. He also robs his group. Their time has been set aside for worship,—an occasion which does not occur too frequently; but he is not ready for the occasion. He robs God, who would meet with His children at this time, but finds them in no mood to converse with Him.

Virtues of a Written Programme

1. The writing of a worship programme demands *serious forethought*. Hymns must be selected, parts placed in order, needs considered and met, all with the group in view. At its worst such a programme is superior to the conduct of worship first thought of after arrival.

2. A written programme aids the *proportioning of parts*,—time for singing, for classes, for platform work, for prayer and Scripture, and the relationships of these to each other.

3. Possession of previously written programmes *protects the leader against deadening repetitions* in song, prayer, remarks and platform work, and serves progress from session to session, for he is able to compare previous and present programme-building.

4. A written programme in front of the leader *imparts confidence*. He does not feel nervous about proper procedure; for this has been thought out and lies plainly before him. His energies may therefore be spent on the conduct itself rather than on further preparation for it.

Ways of Programme-Building

1. *Purpose*. Why do these Seniors meet for worship? Why should they worship at this session, for which we are preparing the programme? What are their needs? These questions demand answer, shall an intelligent programme be prepared. The need of the group is the law of building its programme. The leader must decide on the purpose of the worship session. If members of the group can help him discover the most fitting purpose, so much the better. The age, of course, is kept in mind; the high school students and those working; the available talents in the group; incidents that occurred during the week; national or ecclesiastic occasions; outstanding events toward which we are moving. The theme around which the worship programme will be built is determined by these and other circumstances because they show the need of worship by this group at this time.

2. *Theme*. A theme is more than a title. A title is descriptive; a theme presents a principle and intimates a purpose. For a Christmas programme of worship, for instance, "The Birth of Christ" would be a title; but "God's Great-

est Gift " is a theme. In 2 Kings 7:3-11, we have the story of four lepers near the Samaria gate. The city was starving from a Syrian siege; so were the lepers. They decided to invade the Syrian camp, and found the tents forsaken. The Syrians had fled. The lepers filled up on abandoned food. Then they said, "Let us tell the city." The title might be, "The Four Lepers," but an appropriate worship theme would be, "Telling Others." Were the passage regarding the *ten* lepers, one of whom alone returned to thank the Great Physician, then the title might be, "The Ten Lepers," and all Bible readers would at once understand. "Gratitude" might be its worship theme.

3. *Construction.* Having chosen the theme, the leader is ready to build the needful parts around it,—appropriate music, fitting hymns, suitable Scripture, prayers, offering with dedication, testimony. He uses his Bible diligently and greatly needs familiarity with our sacred literature, to find the part or parts that illustrate or teach the principle inherent in the theme. He dare not rest till he has found that principle embodied in a Scripture passage, no matter how prolonged the search; but with each successive programme he gains readier acquaintance with his Bible. Hymnals should be at his disposal; for the songs need to express the feelings of the group on whose account the theme was planned. Rarely will popular revival songs serve the purpose; if they were written and sung with hardened sinners in view. Though our Seniors have sinned, and need reminders of their wavering ways, they are not hardened sinners, and need a different way of expressing their religious feelings. For further material in programme-building some poetry and much prose is available from our Christian writers.

4. *Writing.* Certain parts of the programme need to be written out more fully than mere outline.

a. *The prayer* should first be itemized, then written in part, or completely. It does not usually seem wise to memorize it; for that renders it mechanical and hinders freedom and enlargement in the actual praying; but it should be read and meditated upon. Particular needs and reasons for thanksgiving will be thought of in such a way that the whole group can feel its own hopes and aspirations expressed. Occasions arise when the leader will discuss with others of the group central subjects of prayer which they shall be ready to express audibly at the right time in the meeting. Not infrequently that right time should be left to their own initiative; for prayer is always in place, and spontaneity is the essence of a good worship service. Most sessions are too stiff and formal.

b. *The call to worship*, which may be Scripture, or a selection from a worship manual, or the stanza of a hymn, or the leader's own production, should be mastered, and usually spoken by the leader. The same call can be used in successive meetings. When the group has grown acquainted with such a call, it may be given responsively or in concert. Psalm 100, among other worship materials, lends itself readily to such responsive work, the leader saying, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving," and the group responding, "And into his courts with praise." Again, the leader, "Be thankful unto him and bless his name," and either the group, or altogether, "For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting and his truth endured to all generations." Similar work may be done with the earlier verses of Psalm 103, part of Isaiah 55, and all of Psalm 24.

Like suggestions are due concerning the *Benediction*. It should be well in the leader's mind and in time the whole group may audibly participate. Among the choicest of these is Isaiah 40:29-31, in which youth is mentioned as needing the strength of God, with the promise of receiving it. If

the leader pronounces the first verse, the group the second, then all may close with the third. But it is good to change procedure. A member of the group may start, or a class together, then the leader or the whole group respond.

Another beautiful closing is found in Psalm 121:7, 8, which gains special significance when a member of the group is about to leave the community. The Aaronic Benediction (Num. 6:24-26) can be used by changing the word "thee" to "us," "May the Lord bless us and keep us." The public pronouncement of a blessing on others should be reserved to ordained clergymen. Further materials will be studied in a special chapter.

d. The dedication of the offering may also be a Bible verse, the stanza of a hymn, or something personally prepared by the leader; possibly a dedication written by another. In any event, the words should be clear in the leader's mind, so that the spirit of worship shall be felt by those who contribute. The hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" contains four stanzas which in turn may each be used at so many occasions. The other hymn, "Take My Life and Let It Be," furnishes further material. Psalm 24 is but one of many Bible passages ready for the leader's use.

All this requires that the leader consult previous programmes, and programmes in other organizations of the local church, for guidance. What worship materials have been assimilated? What has been used? How can the programme be further enriched? How much is available now to the class for responsive work?

Almost invariably certain hymns have been over-used, with the result that worshippers weary of them. This may be true also of oft-repeated Bible passages and verses. Whatever smacks of thoughtless repetition must be eliminated, including even The Lord's Prayer. The young worshipper

wants new ways of expression and has a right to them. Sufficient materials are at hand for him who seeks diligently.

5. The leader must *consult with his aids*. The pianist is entitled to consideration. The leader dare spring no new hymns on her without due warning; so that she can practice at home. Be she ever so skilled, she needs to get into the spirit of that new hymn; else how can she inspire others with its life meaning? The leader may not be able to lead the singing; nevertheless, he cannot afford to hand over to the song-leader the selection of hymns, lest they fail to center around the theme. But he must acquaint the song-leader well in advance with his own selection, that he, too, may catch the soul of each song.

6. *Participation* is an essential of group worship. It requires participants. The Programme Committee of the whole Senior Department of the church is best prepared for taking part. The leader should be able to count on their help. They in turn, acquainted as they are with group-members in various organizations, can suggest helpful participants. But others who are habitually backward ought to be brought out. Private consultation and suggestion with them are most promising of results. If not accustomed to pray audibly, they may be given a Scripture passage in advance, to be read audibly at home, then in the group. Then they may memorize a prayer passage, such as Psalm 19:14; Psalm 139:23, 24; Psalm 67:1-3; or hymn stanza, for instance, "Break Thou the Bread of Life;" "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me," and use it audibly in the group. Reminders during the week and shortly before the meeting render such participation surer.

7. For the *ushering at the opening of the meeting and for the receiving of the offering* during the worship period, the Programme Committee of the department is responsible, because these are functions that cover more than a single ser-

vice. They need to acquaint the leader with their arrangements. Should they fail to inform him, then it is his place to make the necessary appointment for his particular session.

8. *The purpose* of this single worship period, summed up in the theme, should be *imparted* beforehand to all who are expected to officiate or take part in any capacity, and may be briefly mentioned to the group near the opening of the service.

9. *Instruments to be used* have been determined on also by the department's Committee on Worship. An orchestra of wind instruments may be desirable in a large assembly under skilled and consecrated direction; but it has rarely helped the Senior group in worship. Too frequently both leader and player miss the true spirit of devotion. Stringed instruments lend themselves more helpfully to worship.

10. *The succession of parts* may be left to the leader after consultation with the committee. One series may be continued for a month. By that time the adolescent group knows too well what is coming next; a radical change is needed. Fortunately, the chances for transposing parts, so that they come in different relations to each other, are well-nigh endless. Besides, there are the different uses of the same parts, to which further attention will be called.

Essential Parts of a Programme

1. *The Prelude.* If in the worship service of the church the quiet music preceding hymns and invocation is helpful to bring the mind into a worshipful attitude, the prelude is of equal value at worship sessions of organizations. Those who enter the room may know the words of which the music is being played and sense the devotional suggestions that spring from them; so that a twofold impression is made. For this reason a familiar hymn, not stirring but thoughtful, is better than classic music that carries no message of words.

But the prelude should intimate the general trend of the theme.

2. *Call to Worship.* There is in choice verses of the Bible a spiritual force that is found nowhere else. To speak earnestly a Scripture sentence that invites to worship, makes an impression on the group conducive to joint worship,—presuming the leader is himself deeply impressed with its meaning. God is in this place. Long ago He invited worshippers to gather before Him that He might commune with them. Through the leader He is now extending the same gracious invitation.

3. *Hymns.* Sacred verse and music have been written, that by use of them those who worship may express their own feelings toward God and exhort others to genuine prayer. To fulfil this purpose, the hymns must be most carefully chosen. What suits one may not suit another for the outgoing of his soul in prayer or praise. Each member of the group must be remembered. Even the season of the year is kept in mind,—heat and cold, seedtime and harvest. If the theme has been chosen wisely, the hymns should agree with the theme. But they should suggest progress. If they are too similar there is a standstill and danger of nausea. Or when an early hymn urges haste, the group may be ready for home too soon. “O Zion, Haste!” fits better at the close than at the start. “Jesus Calls Us O’er the Tumult,” is naturally an early hymn. “Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me,” and “Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us,” both express our sense of dependence on and leadership of Christ; but they are rather similar in meaning and might better be employed at two different occasions than during the same session. To make this clearer let us constructively criticize a certain programme handed us recently in a class on “Young People’s Worship.”

The student’s chosen theme was “Love of God and

Others." Rather a large theme, which might better be itemized to serve for a series of programs. Hymns suggested, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds;" "Love Divine, All Love Excelling;" "Of Jesus' Love That Sought Me;" "My Jesus, I Love Thee." That the first mentioned hymn should come last is at once apparent; for the love that binds us as disciples of Christ is a result of His love for us. Inasmuch as divine love is the source of our love and gave us Christ, "Love Divine, All Love Excelling" deserves primacy. That love sent us our Saviour, hence "Of Jesus' Love That Sought Me" comes next in order, presuming we plan to use it. "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go" might suit better. In response to that saving love, we love Him, and we express our love by singing, "My Jesus, I Love Thee." This probably suffices for one theme. "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," however, is quite appropriate for a closing hymn, and still expressive of the theme given, or rather of a better theme on this occasion, "God's Seeking Love." This phase of programme building will receive further study in a subsequent chapter.

4. *Scripture.* The Book of Life abounds in incidents, teachings, illustrations, prayers and praises in which great religious principles inhere. At least one of these passages we must search for as a vehicle of the purpose of our theme. It may contain but a few verses; it should rarely extend over ten verses, else at their reading Senior auditors lose interest. If parts are needed from various sections of the Bible, we must have them at our immediate call; for the group is not in the mood for waiting. This selected portion we need first to read audibly in private till we are familiar with it, sense emphases, and feel the personality of the divine messenger who first spoke or wrote it.

In a group of worshippers, Edwin Booth, the late actor, was asked what had been his hardest recital on the stage.

"The Lord's Prayer," was the unlooked-for reply. Urged to speak it, he finally consented. Before he was through, his forehead was covered with sweat and half the banquetters were in tears. In sixty-six words he had tried to express man's devotional relationship with God. Reading the Scriptures to others is no light task; it requires earnest, prayerful preparation.

5. *Message.* If from other literature appropriate portions are available that breathe a true Christian spirit in agreement with the theme, such, too, may helpfully be used; but its source should be made clear. Frequently a fitting story, an incident from the leader's life, or a review of important affairs of the week, serves to prepare the heart for prayer. The leader does wise to write these remarks beforehand, at least in outline.

6. *Prayer.* Although the leading parts of the prayer have been thought out, the leader will consult the group just previous to praying. They need to share his feelings and he must learn of theirs. The prayer ought to be the joint result of their experiences, confessions and aspirations. Others may be invited to pray audibly, if previously told. Either the leader or an aid may sometimes lead in a prayer-song without announcement, immediately following the verbal prayer.

7. *Offering.* In the Children's Department the offering has regularly formed part of the worship. The same is true in our church services. That in the so-called "Main Department" of the Sunday school, and in the session of society and club this devotional element should be omitted is disastrous. A bag thrown into the class-room; nickels, dimes and pennies chucked into the bag, then bag and coin snatched up by a hurried treasurer—this is unworthy of an offering to God. Similarly, the passing of hat or plate during the last hymn at society meeting, without information of purpose of the giving. We are giving to our Sovereign

Lord for the work of His Kingdom. These gifts represent our lives for Him. The giving is an act of worship in one of its deepest senses. We virtually say to God, "Accept this gift as my genuine token of surrender to Thee."

The offering should, therefore, be definitely dedicated during the worship period. From each class in the department one representative may bring it forward in the designated envelope; or appointed ushers take up the class envelope in collection baskets; or offerings are made by individuals without the use of envelopes. The method should be agreed on by the Programme Committee. Time taken for it must not be unduly prolonged, lest restlessness result. Where strong opposition develops to a departmental offering, the prayer of dedication may be offered in class just before the offering is taken. Sooner or later opponents will see the point. In the society no envelopes are customarily used. In any event, the purpose of the offering ought to be made clear and the giving either preceded or followed by dedicatory prayer. Scriptures and hymnal abound in appropriate materials.

8. *Platform work.* This is not in itself part of the devotional period, but is greatly needed to make that period a success. At one session a Scripture passage will be mastered; at another a stanza of a hymn, both in view of future use in worship. Sacred geography work should have its turn here. The Programme Committee of the department will map out the platform work for the season, assigning to each organization requisite portions. In the society, where different leaders are in charge of successive sessions, a member of that committee might best conduct this platform work; but in the Sunday school department with its regular leader, this probably is not necessary. A complete understanding between leader and committee is essential.

9. *A prayer hymn.* Just previous to the period of study

or testimony, it is timely to invoke divine direction jointly; which often is most helpfully carried out in a truly worshipful song. Naturally, the music and the singing need to be somewhat subdued. A stanza may even be hummed, or spoken. The right selection of such a hymn plays a leading part in the whole programme. The Church Hymnal or a real hymnal for the church school is more likely to supply the need than some cheap song-book.

10. *Study period, or testimony, or discussion*, according to the organization. In the society this may be distributed between parts already mentioned. In the Sunday school the period is more likely of one piece.

11. *Music, calling back from classes*. Where a church service follows the class period or the testimony season, leaders need to exercise great caution, lest the idea of going home be too prominent. A prayer at close of class is more promising for church attendance after Sunday school than a full-orbed "Closing Exercise." The Mizpah Benediction, used so mechanically in most societies, is altogether out of place, previous to the evening service. Too frequently the Lord is afforded a chance to "Watch between me and the pastor while we are absent one from the other."

12. *Closing song*. In case no other worship-session follows that of our department, a song seems appropriate near the closing. Plans for successive sessions may be announced, including definite appointments of tasks. In no case may the leader be turned into a bulletin board. Only that which can be incorporated in items of the group's prayer-period can have a rightful place by way of announcements.

It is dangerous to rise for the closing hymn. At once the suggestion takes hold that it is high time to go home. Hats and coats are looked for; perhaps put on during the hymn. An unfortunate individual, trying to get into his sweater-sleeve, is hindered by his nearby friends. A stray cap at-

tracts attention and is swiftly conveyed beyond reach of its owner. Had the group remained seated, these mirth-provoking incidents could not have disturbed the meeting. Instead, at this point we should reach a worship climax; we should go out determined to serve Him whom we worship, and to make Him known to others. The closing hymn will be our vehicle for expressing that holy determination.

13. *The benediction.* The leader alone, the whole group in concert, or part singly, part in concert, the benediction serves to leave in the heart of the worshipper the sense of an abiding God; who is here now, but who also goes with us into the coming tasks of life. For this closing part the group still remains seated. Heb. 13:20, 21; 1 Peter 5:10, 11; Jude 24, 25; Matt. 28:18 and 20, both partly; Phil. 4:8 and 19; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Tim. 2:15; John 17:3; Acts 4:12; Luke 2:52; John 15:10; John 12:24; John 13:17; Mark 10:45; Matt. 10:32, 33, are but a fraction of the numerous passages available.

14. *Silent prayer.* Remaining seated after the benediction, from six to eight seconds of silence with suggestion of worship, helps to retain the spirit of prayer and to deepen it if rightly used. The theme may still be kept in mind during these brief moments.

15. *Postlude.* At the striking of the first key, the group may arise and be at liberty to leave. But the postlude is still part of the complete worship programme. It should not be a two-step, certainly; nor yet a march; but it should waft on the air such notes as suggest a going out into consecrated service. "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go;" "We've a Story to Tell;" "O Zion, Haste!", "Jesus Shall Reign," in fact most mission hymns and those suggestive of service are appropriate for postlude. Occasionally, concluding a deeply devotional session, the sense of an abiding Christ may linger in the music of the postlude.

Programme Changes

No two conducted programmes are exactly alike, unless they are followed from printed or mimeographed form. The leader of worship must beware of uniformity, for it is fatal. Young people are rapidly changing; they *want* change. Should the succession of parts remain the same for successive services, the contents of the parts would differ,—the prayers, the hymns. Or even should these be the same they might be used in different ways, singly and in unison, sung and spoken, as petition or as praise.

But the parts of the adolescent's program need frequent change of position. The succession suggested above requires alteration after at most four weeks' use.

To Build and Conduct a Programme

He who would successfully lead devotions, needs to master the art of programme building and of programme conduct; he must combine the art of writing with the art of leadership. Confessedly, not every one is naturally expert along both lines. But every one who seriously desires can put forth efforts toward the end and gain thereby in skill and power.

1. Others who helpfully lead in worship may be observed, and the reasons of their success carefully studied. They did not easily attain; it cost them heavily. What is there that appeals to the worshipping group? Does the service grip you personally? Is there a happy note? A reverent attitude? A hopeful outlook? Perhaps the leader is willing to have an intimate chat with you; to let you see his ways of preparation and the helps he can secure.

2. Worship programmes are being written by thoughtful leaders. They appear in our denominational and international magazines. A study of them amply repays the effort. Their purpose is not that students should slavishly carry out

the printed items, but rather that ways and factors of programme building be made clear and certain items be assimilated. For such study we append two programs to this chapter, the first of which appeared in *The International Journal*, Sept., 1928, prepared by P. R. Hayward; the second in its July number, 1928, prepared by Marion L. Norris.

3. We learn by doing. By constructing worship programmes, singly or with others, and by conducting sessions for worship, we may master the great art of leading others in the very presence of God and leaving them there.

Thou knowest, O God, it is our deep desire to bring others with us as we bow in Thy presence. Where we have failed because our own hearts were not true to Thee, in Thy great mercy, forgive. Where other evils hinder our high purpose, Spirit of God, we pray for Thy overcoming power. Enlighten our minds that we may choose materials that appeal. Warm our hearts that Thy love may overflow through us to others. Fill us with hope; because Thou art our Helper. And accept our thanks for the help Thou hast already given us, in Jesus Christ. Amen.

I

SENIOR AGE-GROUP THEME FOR THE MONTH: THE ADVENTURE OF SELF-MASTERY¹

First Sunday: *The Adventure of Winning My Inner Best Self*

Second Sunday: *The Adventure of Greater Heights*

Third Sunday: *The Adventure of New Discoveries*

Fourth Sunday: *The Adventure of New Truth*

FIRST SUNDAY: THE ADVENTURE OF WINNING MY INNER BEST SELF

(For those items marked * it is suggested that the audience stand.)

Opening Music: An instrumental selection, played softly on piano or cornet; some prefer to have it come from behind

¹ P. R. Hayward, *International Journal*, Sept., 1928.

a curtain or from an anteroom. "Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult," or "True-hearted, Whole-hearted," or "Lead On, O King Eternal."

***THE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Leader: O come, let us worship as we set forth upon the Quest.

People: We seek Thy face and Thy fellowship, O God.

*Leader:*²

Ho, ye Searchers: now we call to thee—

Come upon the Quest.

Much remains for us to know and undertake.

We await thy vow.

People:

Friends and leaders all, we hear thy call.

Lo, we come.

On the Quest we come. In the Christ's name welcome.

Lo, we come.

Mystery and power call us in this hour.

Lo, we come.

Now we make the Quest, earnest Christian Quest.

Lo, we come.

Quietly we come, unto Thee, we come.

Lo, we come.

A Service of Confession

SILENT PRAYER:

The following prayer is suggested for personal use during the period of silence:

Almighty God, I acknowledge and confess that I have been unworthy in my inner life of all that I might have been. Stir up within me, I pray Thee, a will to fight against the selfishness of my heart. Cleanse me from every selfish desire and save me from every evil way, that I may be more worthy of those who love me and of Thee. Amen.

Leader: We will now humbly confess our sins unto our Heavenly Father.

Almighty God, hearken unto our confession of sin, and have mercy upon us.

For our refusals to heed Thy call to higher things,

People: Have mercy upon us, O Lord.

Leader: For our easy contentment with what we are,

People: Have mercy upon us, O Lord.

Leader: For our neglect of Thy eternal laws of moral and spiritual growth,

People: Have mercy upon us, O Lord.

Leader: For the many great visions of better ways of living that have passed us by because our eyes were intent upon lesser things,

People: Have mercy upon us, O Lord.

*HYMN: (Tune²)

“Prayer of the Quest”

Take us on the Quest of Beauty,
 Poet Seer of Galilee,
 Making all our dreams creative
 Through their fellowship with Thee.
 Take us on the Quest of Knowledge,
 Clearest Thinker man has known.
 Make our minds sincere and patient,
 Satisfied by Truth alone.
 Take us on the Quest for Service,
 Kingly Servant of man's need.
 Let us work with Thee for others,
 Anywhere Thy purpose leads.
 All along our Quest's far pathways,
 Christ our leader and our guide,
 Make us conscious of Thy presence,
 Walking always at our side.

SCRIPTURE: *Jesus and His Quest*—Luke 2:40-52.

MESSAGE: Preferably by the boys and girls giving ways in which each may adventure in growth of *mind*, of *body*, of *religious nature*, and of *social outreach*.

PRAYER: By pastor, superintendent, or boys and girls, with especial emphasis upon the development of the personal lives of the boys and girls—mentally, physically, religiously, socially, as Jesus “advanced” as pictured in the last verse of the Scripture reading.

A Service of Dedication

Leader: To the development of richer and stronger inner lives for us all,

People: We dedicate ourselves, O Lord.

² The words used here may be recited or sung. They have been set to music, a copy of which may be secured for 10 cents, from the International Council. If the music is used, it is suggested that it be learned at some other time than the worship service itself, that the service may go forward without interruption. It will be possible for any pianist to select from the local church hymnal a familiar tune that will fit the meter of the hymn.

Leader: To those habits of health and exercise that build strong bodies, that are fit to be temples of Thy Holy Spirit,

People: We dedicate ourselves, O Lord.

Leader: To the sacred tasks of mental enrichment that through books and study and honest thinking make our minds alert,

People: We dedicate ourselves, O Lord.

Leader: To the joys of social fellowship that make us indeed members one of another,

People: We dedicate ourselves, O Lord.

Leader: To the happy privilege of learning Thy will and of helping to achieve it in the world,

People: We dedicate ourselves, O Lord.

*HYMN: (Tune³)

God's Quest

Youth, oh Youth, can I reach you,
Can I speak and make you hear?
Can I open your eyes to see me,
Can My presence draw you near?
Is there a prophet among you,
One with a heart to know?
I will flash my secrets on him,
He shall watch My glory grow,
For I, the God, the Father,
The Quest, the Final Goal,
Still search for a prophet among you,
To speak My word in his soul.

II

THEME: BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH⁴

PRELUDE: (played softly) "The Church's One Foundation"

*CALL TO WORSHIP:⁵

Leader: "Jesus with Thy Church abide,
Be her Saviour, Lord, and Guide:

Response: "We beseech Thee, hear us.

³ Music prepared especially for this hymn, as used in the International Camp Conferences, can be secured in sheet form from the International Council of Religious Education, 5 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, for 10 cents. It will be possible for any pianist to select from the local church hymnal a familiar tune that will fit the meter of the hymn.

⁴ Marion L. Norris, *International Journal*, July, 1928.

⁵ For parts marked * the assembly will stand.

Leader: "May her lamp of truth be bright,
 Bid her bear aloft its light,
 Bring all nations clearer sight:

Response: "We beseech Thee, hear us."

*HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

*RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 100.

PRAYER:

We thank Thee, kind Father, for Thy many gifts to us, especially for the gift of Thy Son and for the people through these many generations who have valiantly followed Him, and through whose service and self-denial have come to us the Christian Church. Please help us to show our gratitude by loyalty to Jesus Christ and His Church and the great enduring principles for which it stands, through service to Thy children everywhere—in our homes, our churches, our communities, our nation, even to the ends of Thy wonderful world. (Concluding with Lord's Prayer.)

*HYMN: "Soldiers of Christ Arise"

SCRIPTURE: (from Goodspeed Translation)

The First Martyr—Acts 6:8 to 7:2; and 7:51-60

The First Missionary—2 Cor. 11:25-29, 33; and 12:10

The First Christian Business Woman—Acts 16:13-40

Antioch, the First Christian Church—Acts 11:26

TALK OR STORY: (read Scripture, preferably Goodspeed's translation, in preparing story, but do not read it in worship service).

The change in Paul from the time he witnessed Stephen's death (Acts 7:58-60 to 8:1), through his conversion (Acts 9:1-22), his defense before King Agrippa (Acts 26), and his last two years in Rome (Acts 28:16-31). Call attention to Paul's prophecy, "This message of God's salvation has been sent to the heathen. They will listen to it" (Acts 28:28).

The secret of Paul's courage.

How his life—sacrifice, suffering, faith, courage, attainment—can inspire and urge us on to our best.

He'll win few praises from his Lord
 Who does but what he can afford.
 The widow's mite to heaven went
 Because real sacrifice it meant.

—Edgar Guest.

"Sad will be the day for any man when he becomes absolutely contented with the life he is living, with the thoughts he is thinking, and the deeds he is doing; when there is not forever beating at the doors of his soul some great desire to do

something larger, which he knows that he was meant and made to do, because he is a child of God."

—*Phillips Brooks.*

OFFERING:

Offertory: (played softly) "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord"

Leader: For all Thy gifts to us, Our Father,

Response: We thank Thee.

Leader: Bless Thou the offering we bring,

Response: We pray Thee.

Leader: Help us ever to remember the words of the Lord Jesus,
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

*HYMN: "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord"

*BENEDICTION: (unison)

Thy Kingdom come, O Lord,
Wide circling as the sun;
Fulfil of old Thy work,
And make the nations one;
Till rise at last, to span
Its firm foundations broad,
The commonwealth of man,
The city of our God. Amen.

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Most members of the class have led meetings. What had preparation to do with helpfulness of meeting? When others led? Connect these experiences with report on reverence in adolescent group.
2. Advantages and possible disadvantages of writing out a programme.
3. What renders a programme written by an outsider inadequate? What help may it give?
4. Have students show through illustrations the difference between theme and title.
5. Mention factors that lend spontaneity to a worship session. What dangers lurk in it?
6. Let the class bring out the Calls and Benedictions they like, with reasons for preference.
7. Encourage comparisons between Children's, Young People's, and Adult worship services, including church.
8. What instruments are enjoyed, what disliked? Why?
9. How may members of a worship group best participate, aside from singing?
10. Have two or three students read their assignment and

let the class remark on them. Note progress in song series.

11. Assign to part of the class the audible reading of a hymn; to another part the writing of an adolescent prayer for one of their sessions. A theme should be in mind, suitable to the age.
12. Analyze and constructively criticize the two programmes just given.

REFERENCES: *The Public Worship of God*, Sclater, Ch. I. *Practical Church Music*, Lorenz, Part V, Ch. I. *Training the Devotional Life*, Weigle-Tweedy, Ch. IV.

VI

THE GROUP MAKING AND CONDUCTING THE PROGRAMME

IF in two words the essence of a successful worship session could be expressed, then "Prayerful Participation" might serve. For if there be no hearty participation, a sense of flatness oppresses the meeting, and if the spirit of prayer is lacking, the purpose of the meeting is lost.

This twofold aim is not easily achieved; because it covers such deep and broad requisites. In most sessions some have the spirit of worship, but with them alone we cannot rest content. The last member must be reached both for his sake and for the whole group. Irreverence on the part of some disturbs the enjoyment of genuine worship for all. If curious means are employed, participation may be secured from all; but curious means will not bring a worshipful spirit. For instance, "A Backward Meeting," with everything done backward,—entering the room backward, the Mizpah Benediction first, "Amen" at the opening of a prayer, the leader in the back of the room, all these antics may secure co-operation, but when it is all done, what has been gained? Some leaders have joyfully reported to us its huge success, with confident request for further suggestions along that line.

Preparing Together

The first requisite of true joint-worship is true *joint-preparation*. This cannot always be done, because the group cannot regularly be brought together. But where the group or the Worship Committee have a session also on

weeknights, and leaders will co-operatively think through the principle and purpose of a coming session, there it is by no means impractical. May we report on such a process of programme-preparation among a group of high school age? We present the steps in the construction for suggestion, not for an ideal. The time was early in December, hence the approach of Christmas was reflected in their thoughts. The group was asked to suggest a theme that might best express the circumstances and feelings of the season. From several suggestions, "The Giving of Life" was selected by majority favour. Although it was understood that the corresponding Scripture passage would not be used first on the programme, it was decided, for the strengthening of the theme and the selection of hymns, to agree on that first. 1 John 1; Isa. 61:1-3, and Gen. 22:1-14 were considered. The first passage testifies of Jesus dwelling on earth; the second tells of the redeeming work of Christ; the third is the story of Abraham ready to sacrifice Isaac. The Isaiah passage was chosen because Jesus applied it to Himself.

For prelude, "I Gave My Life for Thee," and "Old Hundred" were voted. To the latter some objection arose because used so frequently; but the majority favoured it because of the occasion. This prelude was to be played, but not sung.

For the Call to Worship, John 3:16, though really not a call, was the unanimous preference, because of its big meaning. The Royal Invitation received one suggestion; but was not considered appropriate for this theme. Isa. 52:7; Psalms 95:1, 2; Psalm 105:1-3; Matt. 16:24, 25, would have deserved consideration. When the matter of hymns came up, one exclaimed, "O Zion, Haste!" but was corrected by others, as too early in the programme. It was agreed, however, to place it in reserve; because it might well fit in later on. "Joy to the World" was satisfactory to all, and "I

Gave My Life," already played in the prelude; which was felt to be an advantage. It did not occur to them that it fits the Easter better than the Christmas season. However, the programme was not being planned for Christmas, but rather preparatory to it. The song agreed with the theme. Only two stanzas of these hymns were wanted. "Tell Me the Old, Old Story" was offered and occasioned strong opposition; it had been sung too often. Finally, one stanza of it gained admission, seeing it helped carry out the law of progress,—the coming of Christ, His giving of self, our telling of it to others.

For prayer these items were offered,—Thanksgiving for Jesus. Grace petitioned to dedicate self wholly to Him. Forgiveness asked in view of partial surrender. Promise of full allegiance.

With the dedication of the offering, one stanza of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," namely, "Were the whole realm of nature mine," to be played softly, then spoken by the leader. Doubtless "How silently, how silently the gift of God is given," would have suited still better.

For a prayer-hymn, "Break Thou the Bread of Life" seemed suitable. One member protested on the ground that it was a communion hymn; but he was made better informed.

Discussion arose about closing devotions. If this were in the Sunday school and the church service followed it, there should be a closing prayer in class, it was agreed, but no closing services; for it would suggest going home without attending church. If this were in the Sunday school on an afternoon, a complete closing service was favoured. If it were a Senior Society, then a brief service which must not suggest going home, because the evening service of the church would follow. With this understanding the programme for closing was worked out.

Music to call from classes, "I Am Thine, O Lord," and,

after gathering, the first two stanzas of it sung. When a member mentioned "Verses," it was made clear that a verse is only a single line, so that for the most part the word should be dropped from our hymn vocabulary.

In view of the coming Christmas season, Luke 2:8-14 was accepted for frequent home perusal and mastery during the week, to be used a following session.

Naturally, the Mizpah Benediction seemed to a majority best for closing. But after the origin of it had been told, the character of Laban, who spoke it, and his spirit which must have thought of God as a divine policeman who would watch Jacob when absent from Laban (Gen. 31:49), there arose general willingness to drop that saying forever. Rom. 12:1, 2 received acceptance. There was still "O Zion, Haste!" in the corner of the blackboard. It was taken for the postlude, to be played on leaving, after a brief moment of silent prayer.

It was not the writer's privilege to witness the working out of this programme, though we feel assured of its effectiveness. But another programme was both worked out by a group of high school age during the week and then conducted, with us included, on a Sunday morning in June. The group that worked it out was a class in a Summer Conference and became part of a larger group next Sabbath. Without presenting the discussions out of which it grew, we give the programme.

THEME: "The Day is God's."

PRELUDE: "This is the Day the Lord Hath Made."

"O Day of Rest and Gladness."

CALL TO WORSHIP: "Make a Joyful Noise," etc., of Psalm 100. The speaking of this was followed without announcement by the singing of "Holy, Holy, Holy," which is the chorus of "Day is Dying in the West." The pianist had been informed and was ready.

Frequently the pianist does not start at once on such

occasions, and we suggest that because of this very usual delay such spontaneous singing be led without aid of instrument. Make sure both words and tunes are familiar; then the co-operation of the group, too, is assured.

Brief discussion preparatory to prayer: High school over; schoolmates somewhat scattered, some working, some gone. Summer at its best. Nature glorious, God's handiwork. The local pastor has been ill, has just returned from the hospital. The Conference nearing its close, wistful hearts; will they give themselves wholly to Christ? Need of His help. Promise of loyalty.

Four members of the class took audible part in these prayers. Brief conclusion by leader.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 84.

OFFERING DEDICATION: "Were the Whole Realm of Nature Mine," softly sung.

HYMNS: "For the Beauty of the Earth."

"This is My Father's World."

One idea requested from each class, to be given on return from teaching period. Arrangements for next Sunday's participation, preparatory to coming patriotic Sunday.

JOSHUA 1 suggested for home reading.

PRAYER-HYMN just previous to classes: "Thou Who Touchest Earth with Beauty."

MUSIC FOR RETURN: "Fairest Lord Jesus." Then sung entirely.

RESPONSES given, one from each class. Two stanzas of "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies," read in concert, played, read silently, read in concert again, then sung without hymnals, preparatory for Patriotic Sunday.

BENEDICTION, jointly: "O That Men Would Praise Thee," etc., Psalm 107:8.

SILENT WORSHIP with theme still in mind.

POSTLUDE: "O Beautiful."

Participation in this programme was uncommonly hearty. The students, who had jointly prepared it, entered into the carrying out of their plans with such zeal that contagion spread enthusiasm among the whole group.

Leading Together

A mole-hole changed the course of European history. It caused the horse to stumble on which William III. of England, the successful opponent of Louis XIV., was riding. He fell, and never completely recovered from that fall. "Despise not the day of small things," says the good Book. Of small things life is chiefly made up; hence their importance. To overlook apparently small items is fatal to a worship programme. We must look them all in the eye; or they will presently spring on our backs.

1. *The room.* The first need of a new-born child is not breath, but space. This need remains through life and even after; for the body or the ashes will still require space. For our worship the place of meeting is of extreme importance. Is it used for other purposes? Perhaps it should be. If during the week we played basketball in the same room, the psychology of the situation may be against us; or it may be strongly with us; that depends on the spirit in which basketball was played. In most instances, worship and play are separate items in young life; but in the experience of our worshipping Senior, life and worship must unite. Else, worship means hypocrisy. If in this room prayer went up before the game, for clear heads, strong limbs, ready action and clean play, both players and spectators can now come back to acknowledge divine help, or to confess forgetting Him. But if life and worship have not found themselves at one in the life of our Seniors, then the basketball room is the last place for reverent devotions. Usually, a room dedicated to worship alone facilitates the conduct of worship.

In whatever room we meet, certain aids should be sought and found. If the floor is bare, then the chairs need rubber tips. A cork or asbestos floor helps lessen noise of moving chairs. Too large a room creates a barn sensation; too small a room is hard to ventilate, and makes singing difficult. Fif-

teen square feet of floor-space for each member, for classrooms and worship, affords comfort and retains the feeling of hominess. If these are the Seniors' own rooms they can well afford equipping them to their liking, with permission.

2. *Equipment.* No church schoolroom today is well equipped, either for instruction or worship, without blackboard and maps. The day of lecturing is fortunately past. Conversation has taken its place, which always involves participation. In the room for worship, topics for discussion, suggestions by the group, materials to be mastered, may be written on the blackboard. As for maps, there is scarcely a place mentioned in the Bible that is mentally located by an adolescent group. Even Jerusalem may be situated on the "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere," so far as they are concerned.

The entrance to the room should be in the rear, so that delinquents may not greatly disturb the service. Partitions ought to be solid and not movable; else sounds penetrate from every direction; the folly of sliding doors has wrought sufficient havoc. Windows should, of course, be in the rear or on the side; never in front. Lights belong above, not between the leader and the group; nor behind the leader to glare in the eyes of the wide-awake until perforce they must close them.

Hymnals are secured, that self-expression be fostered. The hymns, therefore, should spring from youthful hearts. Ideally, each group should write its own hymns. Actually, this is too severe a task; but its principle must be approximated. A few adult hymns may serve youth, too. But the hymnal should be selected with Seniors in view. Such hymnals are now securable.

The piano needs occasional tuning and will eventually wear out. In a basement it deteriorates quickly. As for the castaway organ, our Seniors may endure it; they cannot feel it does them justice. Although at this age no liberal

funds are available from private resources, most high school students enjoy an allowance and some Seniors may be earning. The group should not altogether depend on the church for the furnishing and care of equipment, unless on their own part there is systematic contribution to the church's budget.

3. *The gathering.* The beginning of a worship session augurs its helpfulness throughout. If there we fail, our cause is desperate. Yet, in many sessions no definite plans are made to ensure right starting.

a. *The seating.* It seems human nature to drop into the end seat, no matter how many other seats are unoccupied in the same row. That, consequently, the next applicant for that same row must climb past, does not seem to occur to the present occupant. The tendency is to form two long wings next to the aisle. But this innocent procedure spells harm for the meeting. It puts in the rear those who should be nearer front, and leaves large, open spaces in the average room. As a result, a feeling of separateness arises among the worshippers. "The tie that binds" is not physically apparent; therefore it seems spiritually lacking. It requires propinquity of physical bodies in a meeting to secure a sense of nearness of hearts. The rule of the army, whereby each soldier fills the gap before him, is a good rule for each meeting. Starting with the second seat, if not the first, each row needs to be filled out before the next is started. Exception may be made only in case of Sunday school classes who should sit together, and among which gaps will occur on account of absentees.

How shall we reach this aim? Not by pleading or scolding; but by definite, friendly ushering. Each month a group of ushers needs to be appointed for the next month, with instructions. Some will meet arrivals at the door; others will guide them to their seats. Objectors may for the present be permitted their own way. A vote by the majority, making

this the plan of the group, will presently take care of them. Better yet, before starting the plan, it should be presented to and voted by the group.

Those who arrive after the worship has begun will be retained at the entrance till part of the programme is finished. The leader must be careful not to try them unduly; and should afford frequent opportunity for coming in,—even between parts of the programme if need be; but never during them. A brief period of waiting gives them time to think. They are delinquent; next time they will do better. Gradually, delinquency will diminish and punctuality increase; though perfection may never be reached.

The group itself favours full co-operation. Beware of imposing rules on them. They will make rules for themselves upon slight suggestion and then follow them more readily as their own. Almost certainly they make them too severe unless we counsel with them.

If, unfortunately, a gallery surrounds the room, it may be necessary to place a guard there so that none shall climb its stairs before or during the worship period; else their co-operation in worship would be out of the question. In case there are stalls on the same floor, these, too, must be kept cleared for the same reason. The worship-group needs to sit in a body as compact as comfort permits.

b. The starting. The purpose of the prelude is the suggesting of worship. Without being announced, the familiar melody is heard, preferably a minute or two previous to opening time. It marks the beginning of worship. This may not be achieved in the first or second session of its inauguration, but its success depends largely on the leader and the committee working with him. If reverence is in their hearts, others will sense it. Ultimately they will prevail.

This suggestive music need not invariably open the service. A suitable Bible passage, thoroughly memorized, will

have as wholesome an effect. The leader should have it well in hand, having heard himself speaking it. Its meaning must have gripped him; then he need not fear. Three words of it clearly and reverently spoken will bring silence. Or he may begin with a representative prayer. Murmurs may not cease immediately, but they will soon die away, if he is in earnest and his words express the better feelings of the group. He may even start a familiar song in which all are able to join. Whatever way he begins must be the result of most careful preparation in view of the group to be led in the presence of God.

The starting itself is worship. A serious abuse of sacred hymns has crept into our services of worship, except the church service on Sabbath mornings. Hymns are sung for the express purpose of allowing late-comers to get settled. Frankly,—was any hymn ever written for that purpose? If not, then we do not use but we abuse a hymn when employed to cover up tumult. That the abuse is general does not excuse us who know better. Unfair methods are tricks, and tricks are not acceptable for worship.

4. *Participation.* With the establishment of punctuality the battle for participation is half won. Absentees cannot participate except in spirit. Delinquents do not take part till they arrive, and then less heartily, because the initiative grip did not fasten on them. Complete participation may be achieved only in the wake of complete punctuality; which in turn inspires the worshippers to be punctual at the next meeting. Even so, there are hindrances to hearty participation, not all of which we may be able to overcome, and there are helps of which we can make use.

a. *Singing.* The changing of the voice has troubled our boys just previous to or at their entrance on the Senior period. As Juniors they sang lustily; as Intermediates not so well, unless they were excellently led. At Senior age the

matter of song has grown into a serious problem. Yet, at high school they sing. And certain ditties which they hear on the street they manage to appropriate. It is not altogether, then, a case of inability. Most likely they were neglected during a critical period. Their class was allowed to locate in a corner where they could talk and "let the rest of the world go by." Their change of voice provided a good excuse, should any leader plead with them. Thus they lost their taste for sacred song. How may we return to them this great gift of God? For song can be a joy to them throughout life, and even in the life to come we are of nothing more assured than of singing.

(1) It would seem that one sure way might be to let them call for songs. Beware! You are running a risk. They may call for "Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing" at an early part of the meeting, as actually we have witnessed from a Senior. Or the same youths ask for the same song every time. Besides, the songs will probably be altogether out of harmony with the theme. Nevertheless, we suggest that occasionally a chance be given the non-singer to suggest a song; but not necessarily from the floor. The longed-for *hymn may be noted on a slip of paper and used at a later occasion*. Furthermore, the songless members of the group will ere long have their turn on the Programme Committee, where their suggestions will be particularly appreciated. And in season they will have the leading of the group, when again their choices will come into play.

(2) This presents a slow process; there are other helps at hand. One leading reason for non-participation is the lack of appeal in the songs announced. *A more suitable hymn* helps to overcome antipathies. Hymns, that truly serve to lift a youthful soul toward his Maker, challenge that soul to join in its expression. The origin of the song, a snatch from the author's life, and its meaning to others, prove motivating.

Even if the silent member might not by himself be induced to join, there is contagion in the seeing and hearing of others. Almost involuntarily he catches himself starting to sing.

(3) *An appointed leader of song* means much to the success of the meeting. In many sessions two-thirds of the time is occupied in singing. To have the singing drag, spells disaster for the whole session. The right song-leader keeps his eye on the whole group, secures emphases where they belong, demands pauses to bring out the meaning more clearly, encourages those who lag, invites others who seem uninterested. To escape his enthusiasm is well-nigh impossible. Even those who sing not audibly may "make melody in their hearts unto the Lord."

(4) Solo work may edify, but is not of leading importance. While one singer is active, all the rest must remain silent. *Protestantism from its inception has stood for congregational, that is, group singing.* Quartet work has crept in, quite contrary to the original spirit of the Protestant movement, and is both a cause and a result of poor group participation. Keep shy of it mostly in the Senior group, when working for full co-operation.

b. Prayer. This is the heart and center of our worship period, whether audible or silent. To secure participation in it means essential reaching of the sacred aim, while failure here is failure altogether. Let us consider some of the effective ways of prayer.

(1) *Much prayer is voiced through song.* Our better song-books contain many prayers in song form. On giving out the hymn, which should invariably be read or spoken in part before announcement of the number, attention may be called to its prayer-spirit. The leader may actually pray a stanza audibly ere it is sung. Expressing the motive of the theme, such singing is one gracious vehicle of prayer.

(2) *Much prayer is unexpressed by words*; it flows from the silent heart. Silent prayer in the group is in agreement with that spiritual fact. But, like most beneficial ways, it involves danger. Asking for "a moment of silent prayer" does not suffice; it is far from insuring prayer. Items should be suggested that naturally make central thoughts for such prayer,—our need of God; the friendship of Christ; the wonderful promises of God; particular needs in the community; personal situations; plans of the group.

(3) *Audible prayer*. To affirm that every member of the group ought to pray audibly aside from his worship in song, is going considerably further than our sacred writings teach. They tell of gifts distributed to individuals that lack some other gifts. Who dares deny that proficiency in audible, spoken prayer may be a gift. Which does not mean that it should not be cultivated, nor that it can never be acquired by some who now are silent. It does mean that we should walk carefully in the presence of God and keep ourselves from forcing upon others ways of prayer-expression that seem unnatural to those we would inspire.

Prayers of others may be appropriated. We have many Bible verses and passages that in themselves are prayer material, such as will be quoted in a following chapter. These may be used by leaders first, then in responsive readings. They may form part of the platform work and can be suggested to be mastered at home. If otherwise the silent member might be embarrassed, or if he feels that really through such a verse he can express his heart to God, it will greatly aid him. The same is true of choicest hymns.

We need to *culture the naturalness of prayer*, coming as it does out of daily experience. The impression is still too rife that one should be able to pray like a preacher shall he attempt to take part in audible prayer.

c. Offering gifts together. Though motives greatly vary,

the bringing of gifts is everywhere an expressive part of religion and worship. Some out of fear, others with selfish ambitions, a few from truly grateful hearts, worshippers have everywhere through the ages appeared before their gods or their God with gifts. When that gift consisted of a living thing, the silent acknowledgment was made that the person himself belonged to God or to the gods, and that this gift was a token of willingness to live for deity.

Among the Hebrews,—which are our religious ancestors,—a gift was required of every worshipper. “None shall appear before me empty,” was the thrice-repeated injunction given them (Ex. 23:15; 34:20; Deut. 16:16). The requirement of such giving did not cease with the great Gift of Christ; but became through it rather intensified. “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1). In certain instances, such as of the rich young ruler who was too greatly attached to his wealth, giving proved a condition of salvation, a token that the spiritual world bore greater meaning than the material world. The Church was admonished, “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him” (1 Cor. 16:2). But the offering must come from a willing heart, “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, not according to what he hath not” (2 Cor. 8:12).

These requirements and injunctions do not intimate that at every service of worship which we conduct there should be an offering. The Hebrew brought his offering once, perhaps twice, for an annual week of worship. Early Christians contributed once each Sunday (1 Cor. 16:2). But this is clearly indicated, that “*every one*” was expected to participate, and that with willing, cheerful heart. “God loveth the cheerful giver.” Every person, today, connected

with any organization of the Church, is expected to bring an offering to God. This involves two worship principles too frequently overlooked.

(1) *The offering is to God* and not to any cause as such. "He giveth power to get wealth" (Deut. 8:18). To *Him* our grateful hearts go out with this token of thanksgiving. In whatever organization an offering is received, the giving should be a definite act of worship. It is unmistakably offered to God, and dedicated to His service.

(2) *The offering comes out of life and represents life.* This is a relatively simple matter for the Senior wage-earner. He gives from what he earned by labour. His offering represents so many hours of work, that is, of his life. It is not so simple in the case of the high school student, whose allowance provides all the cash he possesses. But a group of Seniors and Young People at a Southern California Summer Conference, in a class on Stewardship we conducted there, decided that each high school student should, with his parents, determine on his annual budget of expenses,—for board, room, clothing and allowance at home, and contribute in proportion to that budget. The majority of that group were high school students; some were on wages or salary. Their conclusion seems worthy of consideration. Definite pledges should be made for sake of the giver, who thus forms a character to which giving becomes natural, and for sake of the Kingdom enterprise which needs reliable sources of supply.

Practising the Presence of God

Group sessions for worship are not separate from daily living, but are introductory to daily living. Each gathering must make life as worship more certain. As buttresses that sustain walls, so may these seasons of prayer sustain everyday behaviour and attitude. They help us to relate our

whole being with all our activities to God. It were pathetic to spend a period of worship together without sensing our intimate relation with the unseen Spirit. The presence of God should be unmistakably felt. Has it been felt in the group we led? Have we personally felt it in the group?

Each Christian leader is a messenger from God through whom the divine Spirit desires to reach His children. Within our own hearts the sense of divine presence needs to be daily cultured. To this end the means of grace are to be used, such as Bible reading, private worship, public worship, communion, perusal of Christian literature, active interest in Kingdom extension. As we join our group, we must ourselves represent our Lord and sense His presence within. Our behaviour will be accordingly,—not sour and sad, but joyous; not trivial, but reverent. Because as leaders of worship we represent our Sender, we are for Him masters of the situation. We confidently expect our group to follow the suggestions on which we have agreed, because on the one hand we are in agreement with the plans of our divine Leader, and on the other hand these suggestions have grown out of the discovered needs of the group. We are considerate of them and they understand us. We have no reason for fretting; but are serene. And our attitude of reverent poise makes itself felt in the group. We shall use the materials previously suggested, whereby the group makes itself part of the programme. No awkward gaps will cause flatness; no periods of inactivity will tempt our group. Our minds will be fully occupied with the business on hand, which is our Father's business.

*"Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth; through all its pulses move.
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art,
And teach me love Thee as I ought to love.*

*"Teach me to feel that Thou art always nigh.
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear;
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.*

*"Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,
My heart an altar, and Thy love the flame."*

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Gather from the class reactions to efforts made to "make this a live meeting." Make sure that loyal efforts be recognized, but have "Stunts" constructively criticized.
2. Scrutinize together the programme-building reported in this chapter, showing points of strength and chances for improvement. Compare other hymns and Scripture passages that would serve group and theme expression equally well or better.
3. Consider what will have been accomplished when young people have first worked out some such a programme and have then conducted it.
4. Outline on the blackboard, with aid of class, a department of the Young People's Division, having assembly and class rooms, all fully equipped. Consider ways of raising the necessary funds.
5. Make a joint study of the present situation relative to late arrivals, wrong seating, and possible ushering. Form plans for remedying defects.
6. Compare notes on methods for securing timely attendance and reverence from the start. Draw up rules, such as the young people themselves might be expected to establish.
7. What is the class reaction to sameness of procedure in programme? To ritual?
8. Gather reports on song and music in the Church Schools represented. Success in finding sympathetic leaders of hymnody, and pianists.
9. Have the assigned reading or recitation of hymns and

Scripture. Do not criticize unless perfect willingness is assured on the part of the readers.

10. Does memory work seem feasible for adolescents? Why? Or why not?
11. Have a clear presentation of relationships of giving to living.
12. Appoint one student from each church represented to bring in a report on the co-operation of organizations in his church, in mastering and use of worship materials and employment of worship leaders. Have all study 1 Cor. 12:12-27 and Eph. 4:11-16.

REFERENCES: *The Public Worship of God*, Sclater, Ch. II.
Music in Work and Worship, Lorenz, Ch. XIV and XV.
The Hymnal for Young People, Littlefield and Slattery.
The Church School Hymnal for Youth, Laufer.

VII

INTEGRATING CHURCH SCHOOL WORSHIP

EACH church may be thought of as a human body, the organizations of the church as her limbs, and individuals as members. No arm or finger can live separate from the body; nor can the body do its work without limbs and fingers. But more than mere activity is required of limbs and members; they must be *active harmoniously*. No matter how dexterous a woman's hands, if her eyes are weary or defective it will go hard with her sewing. The postman whose legs are good, but the fingers stiff from cold, has difficulty depositing mail where it belongs. The purpose of all limbs and members of the body is to work jointly, each fulfilling its own function as part in the purposed work of the whole body. First Cor. 12:12-27 and Eph. 4:11-16 present in clear and vital fashion the principles of inter-relationships within the local church.

Inter-Relationships

Out of younger departments our adolescents come and into older departments they will be going. We cannot wisely deal with them as if they stood alone. Largely they are what home and church have made them, and in their moulding of Christian character we now also have our chance. When we pass them on, they will not be just what they were when we received them. Whether they will be stronger depends greatly on us. Let us consider them first just as they are, after which we may think of them as we want them to be.

Our church is their religious school,—probably their sole religious school. As the high school has classes for them in mathematics, Latin, history, and biology, so we have, or should have, classes for them in Bible study; in Church history including missions; in stewardship; in personal work; in worship. And as the high school has arranged various periods for its classes, and expects the student to attend not only one or two periods, but three or four, and some extras, so the live church expects her youth to be present at the class in Sunday school, at the meeting of the society, at a church service of worship, and at such weekday club activities as have been arranged for practical purposes. The Senior, who misses some of these appointed periods, lacks adequate religious training and is bound to show his defects presently when called upon to render service. Let us review the training that has preceded the Senior period.

1. *The Children's Division.* From the day he was born until he meets with us as a Senior the wide-awake church has nurtured his spiritual life.

a. *Home.* If his parents are church-members, there is, or should be, home worship; else a leading reason for weaknesses, that later become evident, is already making itself felt. Home is the unit of the church. Parents need training in worship for the child's sake. A Parents' Class is requisite as part of the Church School. The earnest Cradle Roll worker furnishes worship-material for the parents' use, whereby the little one asks the blessing at the table and retires and arises with a prayer on his lips.

b. *Beginners and Primary Departments.* The Worship Programmes of these younger groups are relatively superior. Children's leaders have attended conventions, have read books, have faithfully laboured to acquire skill in their devoted labours. Exceptions are the more pitiful. Children huddled together under ignorant and thin-skinned leaders

are cruelly deprived of their birthright. But on the whole the smaller children of our school receive a good start in ways of worshipping.

c. The Junior Department. This forms the bridge to the adolescent period. Unfortunately, the strength and beauty of such bridges greatly differ; yet they largely determine the spiritual acumen and quality of the Intermediate and Senior.

(1) When the Junior is dumped out of the Primary into the so-called "Main Department," his chances are slender; the bridge by which he should travel onward is practically cut from under his feet. "Opening Exercises" in that department were not planned with him in view; most likely they were not planned at all. The songs are not vehicles for his expression toward God. The prayer leaves him untouched. He is in that environment a spiritual orphan; "No man careth for his soul." His natural reaction is to talk to a neighbour during prayer and Scripture reading, to do mischief while there is singing, to forget and deny all the worship-culture he enjoyed in earlier departments. Who is to blame?

The church-building has *no room for him*. Out on the farm there is room for little calves in one department, for heifers in another, for milch-kine in a third. There is room for little pigs with sows, or shotes, and for fattened hogs. There is room for colts and for horses. Departments are adjusted according to every need in stable and barn; but not for that Junior who is getting ready to leave childhood for youth. In town and city every store and shop and office has its department; so has the public school. But in the church school no money is made; we are merely dealing in souls. Why should we empty our pockets of tangible dollars for the nurturing of intangible, Christian character!

The church may have *no leader for him*, either. How could such a church develop adequate and self-sacrificing

leadership! Those who might now be leaders had that same bridge cut from under them by which they could have marched toward full-fledged Christian manhood. Thus the godless procession goes on. But why dishonour the name "church" by applying it to such unreliable professors of the Faith! That company is doomed, and deserves to be doomed.

(2) When the Junior enjoys his own department under the right leadership, he is preparing for Christian youth. Continuing what was so well begun, he masters worship materials from Bible, hymnal and other spiritual sources, and learns to use it for devotional expression. He finds himself related to his surest Friend, whom he admires, like whom he wants to be, whom he fears to grieve. He errs, but comes back to that sympathetic heart. He brings sacred songs to his home and whistles great hymns on the street. At times he completely forgets; but the general trend of his steps is Christward. His leaders are preparing him for that approaching period when sinner and saint will be struggling in him for mastery,—the time of complete surrender and church-membership. The Junior Society, the Junior Service, and the Junior Club all play their part in his development. Leaders in these groups consult with each other, work out the complete programme together, so that each may supplement the other and derive benefit as well. Between them they are given to see many sides of that same disciple's life. The private worship of the Junior on the one hand, and his activities on the other, become a unit in the worship and instruction of the church school.

2. *The Young People's Division.* This will certainly be non-existent, or impossible of direction, if previous stages were neglected. In a large church, where parents insist on their sons' and daughters' attendance, there will be a remnant. Many smaller churches have already by this time lost

their opportunity. In case there remain a few stragglers, the neglectful church throws youth and adult together in Sunday school to make the best of it between them. In any event, an Intermediate or Senior department is not even thought of. But let us turn to the church school true to its calling.

a. Intermediates, 12-14. Mastery of worship materials, and practice in worship participation are continued. Stress is laid on personal surrender, with expression of loyalty to Christ by public confession and uniting with the church. The open-eyed pastor meets personally with this group for weeks or for months, to instruct them in the meaning of church membership, its duties and privileges, the significance of Baptism and The Lord's Supper, the outstanding teachings of Christianity on which all evangelical churches are agreed, the work of this particular church in the community and in the Kingdom of God, the deeper meaning of private and public worship.

The group meets Sabbath evenings for worship, because *they believe that worship is needed*. Which means, there are religious problems that need solution, and there is service to be rendered for which wisdom and courage are requisite. Without some such interest appeal, why should they meet again? The group will attend at least one worship service of the church and take part in it; the service being prepared with them also in mind. Some of the Intermediates may serve in the morning or evening choir; or play instruments.

During the week the Intermediate is Pioneer, or Scout, or Campfire, for sake of recreation, fellowship, and service. Whatever spiritual results accrue are largely contingent on the leadership. But in our efficient church school the choice of such leadership is not haphazard; it has been carefully trained and selected. Weekday leaders meet and counsel

with Sunday guides so that expression and impression may co-ordinate.

b. The Young People's Department, 18-23. As we depend on younger departments for the forming of our Seniors, so we are to be mindful of the group just older; for whom we get the Senior ready. Either college or employment lies before the graduating high school student. He should ably witness for Christ wherever he goes. In the church his day for leading still younger feet has come. Is he ready for it? In college his convictions soon will tell among his classmates; they will influence him and he them. In the office, the factory, the shop, or on the farm the call for the right word is frequent. By birth and training the young Christian is a leader. His worth has been enhanced in the right Senior department.

Where many young people remain in the local church, they should form their own group for worship; else by their more thorough training they will surely dominate the Senior constituency and discourage the Senior's participation. Many churches have no high school age society, because those older are so capable. This means, of course, that in a few years the young people above high school age will not be capable either, for they have lacked adequate training. But the high school age can have a vigorous gathering of its own if sympathetically directed.

In churches in which the adverse conditions exist that threaten the spiritual growth of oncoming generations, the student of worship must not remain silent. In private conversations, at faculty meeting, at all suitable occasions the evil must be pointed out and the remedy shown. A constructive programme that appears feasible to those willing to do better, needs to be worked out and presented. If not heeded, agitation must be continued and personal helpers secured.

Worship in the Senior Department

We have considered the Senior in his perpendicular relationships,—related to those younger and older. Now we are ready to think with him in his horizontal relationships, a worshipping member of various Senior organizations within the church school, and of the church itself. Put in terms of life-phases rather than of subjects, these organizations jointly foster worship, instruction, service, and recreation, all in Christian fellowship. Similar in the main to the development of the youth Jesus, who increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and with men, this is called “The Fourfold Life,” and has become the fourfold aim of every well-defined programme of youth,—in the local church, in the denominations, and in the International Council of Religious Education with all its state and provincial auxiliaries. The acceptance of this programme marks great advance in every avenue of Christian training, and we must labour to bring its blessings into every local church. It is the *Jesus Way*. Literature explanatory of this fourfold programme, and textbooks guiding its operations are available from educational agencies of denominations, state and international council. Suggestions have grown out of the young life of the Church itself, rather than being imposed on our youth; hence the programme represents youth movement in its most Christian aspects. For some of our Seniors the programme is growing familiar as the TUXIS PLAN, that is, “You and I Training in Service for Christ.” The united planning and working of every organization related to and part of the Senior’s life, is an unalterable requisite of the TUXIS PROGRAMME, or of its equivalent.

a. The Sunday school by itself is insufficient. A century and a half back the Sunday school movement started outside the Church. Christian men of vision saw a need and tried to meet it; while the churches of which they were

members lagged behind. The results of this untoward condition are still felt, after the Church has begun to march abreast with the movement. Many Sunday schools are not part *of*, but are apart *from* the church; they are part of the past. This hurts. As a limb of that sacred body, no single organization in the Church may with impunity move and act as if there were not other members of that same body.

(1) The Principal of the Senior Department of the Sunday school, to know his constituency, will at least occasionally attend the society session of the same department. There he will discover leadership talent of which he was unaware,—some leading in prayer, others vigorously singing, not a few ready with testimony. What they are able to do in the evening, they can do also earlier in the day; the worship programme in the Sunday school will be greatly enhanced through their co-operation. It may not be physically possible for this same Principal to attend the club, too; but he should have an inkling of its activities and its moving spirits.

(2) What is true of one leader is true of all; their interests and acquaintance must include the entire Young People's area to include any young people. A regular faculty meeting of all officers and teachers throughout the entire Senior Department of the Church is clearly a necessity, both for the better understanding of the Seniors in their various capacities and for the mapping out of a complete programme in which each organization shall have its definite part.

b. The organization of Sunday school, society, and club cannot helpfully be formed and carried on when each proceeds as if the other did not exist. Emphases will differ, but *aims should be united*, of instruction in Sunday school, testimony in the society, physical activity, comradeship and play expression in the club. While worship, as a sense of the presence of God, must permeate each group and session, such wholesome training is not achieved without a united

purpose, plan, and organization. The activities of each session and for each season must be related. This requires definitely chosen leaders for the joint direction of emphasized activities, each leader knowing his own part best, but freely consulting with his colleagues to whom other parts have been committed. In our present study we are chiefly concerned with the Senior's worship, the joint preparation and direction of which is so closely bound up with the other phases of his Christian culture,—instruction, service, fellowship and recreation. We shall confine ourselves to its adjustments and correlations; which are essentially true also of Intermediate and Young People's Departments.

(1) *One Worship Programme Committee for the whole Senior Department.* This committee is formed from one or two representatives of each organization in the Senior Department, that is, separated by respective time arrangements. Because worship naturally arises out of attitudes, situations and conditions, such as gratitude, hope, intentions, needs, service and opportunities, the themes for worship programmes will be mapped out by this committee according to ascertained emphases and phases of activities in each organization, but leaving the minuter working out of each single programme largely to the appointed leader of devotions for a particular session.

(2) *Correlation of worship materials.* Without interfering with the liberty of those who conduct worship, the joint committee should determine on such matters as the abandoning, for a season, of songs that have been overused, and the acquiring of certain hymns that seem suitable for spiritual expression under present circumstances. Passages of Scripture and other Christian literature may also be selected and designated for mastery and use during the ensuing season. It is wise to consult and advise in these selections the pastor or the educational director; for newly acquired ma-

terial may be of help also in the worship service of the church; while much may already have been mastered in earlier departments.

(3) The successive leaders of worship in the various groups should be appointed by this joint committee and should meet with the committee in order to catch the spirit of unity which prevails among them, and to acquire some skill in programme construction. Principles of programme building should be discussed, and particular elements in *the planning of this one programme considered*, with a series of programmes and the worship in other Senior organizations in view. If the same succession of parts in the worship programmes has been followed for a month, care should be taken that a change be observed. Nor can the matter of song-leadership be safely overlooked. The appointed leader is not able simultaneously to lead the singing and to play an instrument. He may need help in both.

(4) At least one representative of this Joint Programme Committee should *meet with representatives of other departments* and also with the leader chiefly responsible for all church and church school worship, to map out with them in general outline the comprehensive worship programme, in which each department has its share. This grows specially needful in face of outstanding days and seasons, such as Christmas, Easter, Children's Day, Rally Day and Thanksgiving. The worship contributions to such joint occasions should dominantly grow out of the regular, constructive work of each department.

c. The church. The day is not far distant for the Senior when he will step out of his present department, either to leave for college or to enter an older department in the local church school. In time this new environment, too, will be left behind as he joins the adult ranks. But one organization ever continues; *the Church abides*. Odd notions of

otherwise devoted Christians regarding Sunday school have militated against the nurture of loyalty to the Church on the part of a growing generation. These influences have done their damage; we cannot quickly shake them off; but we must foster Church loyalty in our Seniors at every step. The worship service of the Church, when rightly conducted, possesses a richness which is lacking at all other worship services. It reaches hearts of old and young. From the meditative voluntary to the suggestive postlude the whole range of parts induces reverence in the soul that is willing to yield. Much can be learned from the Church's service, to be applied to worship programmes in the organization,—the attitude of the leader; the dedication of the offering, showing it is worship; the reading of hymns before singing; the carefully thought-out prayer. And much can be contributed by our Senior to the worship service of the Church, in singing, in responses, in reverent attitude of body, in actual uniting in prayer. If pastor and Senior have worked together, part of the Senior programme may find a helpful place in the worship plans of the church. But these constructive ends will scarcely be achieved without mutual understanding between all church leaders, and definite co-operative planning.

d. The home. Worship is severely handicapped if it does not reach the home. Leaders of worship in the Senior Department cannot afford to leave home-habits out of mind, for no prayer-life can develop steadily without *daily* exercise. Private worship needs to be urged and taught as opportunity permits; but leaders should go further. Our Senior needs reassurance and careful guidance. When Christian conviction has really gripped him, he can no longer feel content in a prayerless home. He is keenly anxious to know how far his own responsibilities reach in the matter, and what he can and should contribute toward the establishment

of the family altar. This brings us as leaders face to face with the most intimate inter-relationships of the church school. For Christian education would remain quite incomplete should we fail to reckon with the home. The young student's problem is our problem.

The adolescent may be assured that he is not immediately responsible for family worship; but that he is very much responsible for his own prayer-life at home. There will be worship in his home so long as he conducts his own devotions and lives in agreement with them. With this assurance the adolescent's teacher enters an open door such as is not afforded to any other leader. The Principal of the department is dealing with a sort of congregation; but the class forms a kind of family. Within this smaller group the teacher can be intimate. It is his privilege to testify to this small company of his own prayer-habits and what they have meant to him. With tact he may lead his group to agree on a certain time of day, most convenient to all, that shall be observed as a brief devotional season, preferably in the morning. At such a time each may feel that the others are unanimously with him in worship. Preparatory to this daily observance it is well to consider the needs of each member of the class, and other items for prayer they have in mind. This is made easier by use of a box, in which choices of hymns, puzzling problems, and suggestions for prayer-subjects are placed without signature. Inquiry at the next meeting regarding helps and hindrances in the carrying out of the plan is by no means inquisitorial, but constructive.

With personal prayer well established, the next step can be taken. Almost certainly Mother observes some form of private worship. That makes two in one home. Perhaps Father kneels at his bedside, regularly or now and then when he feels needs. If there are brothers and sisters, they were probably taught to pray. The problem is how to bring

them together in prayer. Obviously, the adolescent with personal convictions in the matter needs to take the initiative. He may probably best broach the matter to his mother. Between them it will not be difficult to enlarge the group to include younger brothers and sisters. Mother should talk the matter over with Father; who is likely to feel hesitant, for he knows not in what manner to conduct family worship. Success with him will be most promising if worship materials have been obtained, such as a selection of brief Scripture readings and appropriate prayers, which will for the present relieve him of the apparently unbearable burden of composing prayers. As for a blessing at the table, this may be invoked by the interested adolescent or by any other child in the home. And in case the father refuses to take his part in the leading of family devotions, the son or daughter should feel free in co-operation with mother, to carry on.

Joint-Worship and Joint-Enterprises

Ever a basic purpose of joint-prayer is *a need that is unitedly felt*. Such a felt need invariably arises when joint enterprises are planned and definitely faced. The early disciples, gathered at Jerusalem after the ascension of Christ, continued their worship day after day in view of the tremendous task before them; they held united supplications, made united promises, and looked for uniting power, because just ahead of them lay a task that called for undivided effort. Nothing will help unity of worship, within departments, between departments, and within the entire church school as will *a common task*. For when each face turns toward Christ each face at the same time turns to the other fellow-worker. A young people's group in southern Minnesota was proceeding "on this poor dying rate" and wondered what could be the matter. Then Charley, the Showman, joined

them. Having been elected by a class of Intermediates to be their regular teacher, he was soon soundly converted. With his boys he joined the Endeavour Society. They made him chairman of the Social Committee. Unused to custom, he considered this an appointment to Social Service. There was a County Farm that could be cheered by young folks on Sunday afternoons; an Indian and his squaw could neither read nor write; at the town hospital they liked to hear young people sing. For all this Charley arranged, appointing different groups each Sabbath, and asking them to report the same evening on their experience. As announcements were made the previous Sunday, there was prayer for divine blessing on the enterprise, with mention of purpose. When reports came in next Sunday evening there was thanksgiving for divine help and further prayer for particular persons. It soon became a question how everything needful might be put into a single session. Worship grew vital. A united purpose developed, out of which united prayer sprang up freely, while joint prayer further served to consolidate purpose.

The young people taking charge of the church service once a month has somewhat similar effect. It may be prepared by one of the three departments in the Young People's Division, if the church school is large; or by all combined in smaller schools. A pageant may be given, presenting a mission enterprise, or an educational feature, or Bible story, a chapter in church history, or even an episode in our American history in which religion played a vital part. But pageants are not the only ways of bringing interesting ideas and facts. Why should not out of an entire department or division of intelligent adolescents enough talent be available to conduct an evening church program in which from four to six young people succinctly summarize the teachings, activities and experiences of the last six weeks! A six-minute

speech from each means a half-hour of platform work aside from worship and song. Surely, after attendance at a Young People's Rally, or convention, or summer camp, or school, the problem will be not how to produce, but how to condense and eliminate. And all the while those who participate feel more closely that they are part of church and school.

The many members of a group feel more united, too, when they support one of their number who is being educated for life service. Reports from him and letters to him, ways and means of raising necessary funds, united plans and prayers, all serve to bring young hearts more solidly together. Which remains true to some extent where a Christian enterprise is supported at home or abroad. For the fostering of this bond and the strengthening of purpose, joint sessions of all departments in the Young People's Division, and united attendance at church services are immensely beneficial.

Broader Relationships

Each church school is part of a great denominational enterprise, with worshipping groups over the entire country. Most of the Lesson Helps used, and the papers taken home from Sunday school, were issued from headquarters of the respective denomination. Our adolescent, through membership of his group, is related to that particular denomination. So are thousands of other young people, to whom our group, therefore, is related as well. But the denomination contains smaller units, more easily brought together than those in different states. Almost without exception our denominations provide ways for their young folks to meet each other, at rallies, institutes, conventions, conferences and schools. Few experiences are more helpful to the adolescent than this meeting of other adolescents of his own denomination, who are experiencing similar training, and are acquainted to a

degree with the same leaders. They will compare notes, learn better ways of accomplishment, enjoy mutual fellowship, and unite in worship.

Yet, no denomination comprises the great Church of God; it requires them all and some, unfortunately, not in a church, to compose God's Kingdom on earth. At present more than forty denominations have combined for Christian education. No longer are the International Council of Religious Education, and the respective state and provincial councils, non-denominational agencies; they are the servants of our churches, with leadership chiefly chosen from our denominations. They, too, hold conferences, conventions and schools, at which workers in all denominations are brought together. When our adolescents respond to their call they will widen their vision and enjoy fellowship with others of their own age with whom they exchange experience and in whose company they bow before one Lord.

A Council of Religious Education

The suggestions of this chapter will have little meaning for the local situation without a Council of Education in the individual church. This Council, appointed by the Church Board, or elected by the congregation, corresponds to the public school board; the educational interests of the local church are hers. Plans for and by the Young People's Department will be cleared by or through the Council, and supported if approved. Needful improvements can be inaugurated with least friction through this Council. Inadequate preparation for the adolescent period, and unsatisfactory relationships, are adjusted before that body. If at all possible, the work of the Council should unify in one responsible person, a Director of Education, able to devote more time to the church school than most workers are able to allow.

*"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.*

*"Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers,
Our fears, our hopes, our aims, are one,
Our comforts and our cares.*

*"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.*

*"When we are called to part
From those we hold in love,
We shall be with them still in heart,
And hope to meet above."*

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Report on the reading of 1 Cor. 12:12-27 and Eph. 4:11-16 should make a suggestive introduction to discussions, when applied to the Church School.
2. Report on co-operation or lack of it between organizations of the church; present and previous cases; possible remedies.
3. Thinking of the Church School in terms of a Normal School, draft rough outline of faculty, student body, curriculum, plant, recitation periods, and purpose.
4. Trace the educational steps that have led up to the Young People's Division.
5. Consider what results may be fairly expected from the Young People's work and particularly from the Senior Department.
6. Have the TUXIS PLAN clearly defined,—its origin, meaning, progress, and inter-relationships.
7. Map out a conference between leaders in the Senior Department, the Young People's Division, and the Church School. This may be assigned for home-work.
8. Find reasons why the Morning Church Service is not

regularly attended by the adolescents. What is lacking in it, and what do the students miss?

9. Were it helpful to have one pledge for the entire Senior Department? Students might prepare what seems to them a fair pledge, if possible consulting the Seniors on the matter. Why should no binding pledge be prepared by the leaders?
10. Ascertain whether there is any difference in worship attitude between adolescents from Christian and from non-Christian homes. Discuss reasons.
11. What co-operative tasks have called out united worship of the high school group in the local church? What results?
12. Discuss recent movements of denominational and inter-denominational import for the uniting of our young people in Christian faith, worship, service and friendship.

REFERENCES: *Agencies for Religious Education of Adolescents*, Munro. *An Integrated Program of Religious Education*, Harper. *The Church School*, Athearn. *Church School Leadership*, Rafferty, Ch. XVI.

VIII

PRAYER CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS

SERIOUS objections are offered from not a few directions against forethought regarding prayer. Although the practice in some sections of our country would not be approved, where untrained preachers feel pride in their ability to orate on "a text that just popped into my mind," nevertheless, essentially that lax way seems popularly favoured when it comes to prayer. Even ministers have been known to stumble in this pit, never preparing their pastoral prayer, and consequently repeating themselves each Sabbath to the wearying of their flock. Our young people readily fall in line in agreement with the law of inertia, and believing there must be something unholy, untrusting, in forethought preparatory to prayer. How did this feeling come about? It is not usually applied to religious speech; but seems confined to prayer.

Jesus, foreseeing the day not far distant when His disciples were to be ill-treated for His sake, prepared them against such contingencies. "When they shall deliver you up," He said (Matt. 10:19, 20), "take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." A special occasion was in mind relative to speech in self-defence, not a principle to be applied to every act of prayer. When we conduct worship there is no thought of our being delivered up before rulers and magistrates; accordingly, the promise that went with persecution does not apply there. When the

disciples asked our Lord, "Teach us to pray," he set about instructing them in prayer. He built a prayer, so comprehensive and so deep, so clear and yet so mystical, that it has served through all these centuries to express human hearts toward the Father. But would Jesus speak one way and do another way? The building of a prayer is after the mind of the Master, and our Bible is a rich treasury of written, that is, prepared prayers.

The evils of unprepared prayer have been sufficiently tasted. The leader rambles, seeking both words and thoughts, repeats himself in the same prayer and in successive prayers, and wonders as greatly how he may best end as many a woman at the telephone. Not seldom he uses the Lord's name for a stop-word, to gain time for further framing of phrases. Those whom he is supposed to lead could not follow him if they would; but their willingness soon reaches the exhaustion point. Yet, facing the next ordeal, he is again in the rank of the "foolish virgins." He remains, perhaps conscientiously, unprepared. It is our firm conviction that such is nowise to the glory of God or the edifying of man.

Inexhaustible Interests for Creative Prayer

Our prayer ought to remain fresh, according to the promise, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him . . . (it) shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Ruts are without excuse for the sincere worshipper, whether in private or in the group. But the means offered by the infinite Spirit must be employed. In the main there are seven bubbling sources of living water

1. *God.* *The attributes of our Father*, revealed in nature, in history, in the lives of men, and in our sacred Scriptures, present wonders which we have not begun to fathom, but for which eternities of contemplation are required that supply

forever new interests to the worshipping heart. Righteous and yet merciful; holy, but seeking sinners; omniscient and instructing His children; almighty and allowing the wicked for a time to work their evil ways; benevolent, yet permitting His children to suffer; permeating the universe, but near to every humble heart;—how can we pray to such a Father in the same way day after day as if no more qualities could be discovered!

2. *Jesus Christ.* The Son of God came to reveal the Father. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). His life was an expression of God's gracious attitude toward us. His teachings were conveyers of God's will. His sacrifice became the culmination of a purpose which heaven alone could conceive. His resurrection is a type of every victory of God and all His children; for we in Him "have overcome the world." How could we exhaustively think of the things our Saviour did, the truths He taught, the death He suffered, the victory He won, and supremely the Person He is!

3. *Our sacred writings.* Through the ages human hearts have held communion with God, and some of their experiences they have related. They went through deep waters, but God went with them. They walked through the valley of the shadow of death with loved ones, and came out alone; but God never forsook them. At times they even forgot their fellowship with God, to go their own way. Then trouble came swift and thick, till they returned to God. This also has been told; so that our Bible has become a record of human experience in the light of God. As Jesus Christ is God and man, so our Bible is the book of God and man. There is scarcely a page in it which does not inspire the heart with a new sense of this intimate relation between ourselves and the invisible, eternal Father. Perusal of the Scriptures perpetually refreshes prayer life.

4. *Experiences of Christians* through the ages. The Book of Acts forms the beginning of innumerable, vital stories of Christian men and women who sensed the presence of God. Old Polycarp, preferring death to denial of his Saviour; the golden-mouthed Chrysostom, who thundered fearlessly against his city's sins; Savanarola of kindred spirit; Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, Wesley, and famous women, too, from Paula of Bethlehem, and Madam Guyon, the mystic, all the way to Mary Lyon and Alice Freeman Palmer. There is that galaxy of missionaries, Francis Xavier, the Jesuit; William Carey, the cobbler; David Livingstone, the explorer, and Mary Slessor, queen of the blacks on the west-coast of Africa. These followers of Christ inspire our youth to high endeavour.

5. *World interests* appeal to youth. They feel the urge of the Golden Rule as truly among nations as among their fellows. They favour unity among all Christians, in creed and deed. They demand fairness to Orientals, squareness in municipal affairs, consideration toward woman and child; decency in commercial amusements. Of these interests our youths are thinking and for their fulfilment they will work and pray, if rightly directed.

6. There is *the book of nature*, too, of which so many pages of our Bible have been filled with adoration. The power, the righteousness, and some of the grace of God are manifest in our visible world. The things we see were once the thoughts of God; through them He partly expresses Himself. Such Psalms as 8, 19, 37, 104 and 107 are representative of countless utterances in our Scripture, and they fit the minds and lips of youth. Psalm 19 shows with striking clarity how from nature the worshipper is led on to spiritual truth, such as reveals to him the needs of his own inner life. The process is, nature, law, sense of imperfection, prayer for divine forgiveness and help.

7. *Our own daily experiences*. Never a day is spent ex-

actly as the day before. New duties await us, new trials, and new triumphs. We meet with people we never met; we engage in conversations on new topics; we face situations not previously encountered. Each day is fresh; the path was never trod. When evening falls, another record has been written on the scroll of our biography. But we are daily with all our thoughts and deeds related to our Father. In prayer, we shall think back and remember where we believe we pleased Him and where we caused disappointment. We do not need to say "*If.*" It is ours to clear our minds and to mention facts. Generalities are deceiving, particulars help us to remain sincere. They also aid us in keeping out of ruts. We have anew to ask forgiveness; we have new plans and hopes; we have new causes for thanksgiving.

Strengthening Our Private Prayer

Basic to all worship is the individual's relationship to God. Private prayer needs primary attention; for out of it must devotional life proceed. How shall we strengthen it?

1. *Contemplate one or more of the interests we have just noted.* It would not seem wise to attempt all of them in a single devotional season, lest none be contemplated thoroughly. Haste and reverence do not mingle well. God has eternities at His disposal and will supply us with sufficient time; eternal life is ours already. The supreme factor in our worship-period is that we relate ourselves with all we think and do to God. "In thy light shall we see light." Then shall we also learn to relate ourselves to the world about us, and personal and world-events to God.

2. *Consider defeats.* Where did we stumble and why? Was there hidden pride? Presumptuous sin? Did an old habit reappear which we had considered overcome? Have we unconsciously been fostering desires that are not Godward? There certainly was a weak spot; we must find it.

And it needs strengthening. Perhaps, we should rise from our knees and "be first reconciled with our brother." For no part of The Lord's Prayer is made more emphatic than "As we forgive our debtors." With all the riches and liberality of divine grace, there is no promise of forgiveness without our forgiveness to others. Not unlikely, our defeat may be traced to a defect of that kind. Where lies the road of overcoming?

3. *Look at achievements.* How did we attain them? Who helped us? Did we adequately thank them? What did our achievements mean to God? Were they Kingdom victories, or victory over self? How shall we further use them to advantage? Is there pride in our hearts over our talents? If ever we needed the spirit of humility it is now. "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from above." "What hast thou which thou hast not received?" But we may well be inspired by our success and press on. More victory looms ahead so long as we remain "co-workers together with him."

4. *Peruse prayers of others.* a. There are numerous *private prayers in the Bible*. We readily recognize them by the first personal pronoun. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," etc. (Psa. 19:12-14). "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," etc. (Psa. 51:10-13). "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee," etc. (Psa. 130:1-6). "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me," etc. (Psa. 139, complete, with omission of verses 19-22).

For appreciation of divine teachings there is no richer treasury than Psa. 119, of which these are outstanding samples, vs. 9, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Vs. 11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee." Vs. 18, "Open thou mine eyes that I

may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Vs. 59, "I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." Vs. 105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Vs. 126, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law."

For courage, the contemplation and use of Psalm 46 is inestimable. It was Luther's Psalm, which, together with the rock-built Wartburg, inspired his hymn, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott." Read Psalm 46 slowly, first silently, then audibly. Parse it, noting premises and conclusions, rests and exultations. Observe seeming contradictions, "What desolations he hath made in the earth! He makes wars to cease, breaks the bow, cuts the spear in two, burns the chariot of war in the fire." Is it any wonder the appeal for sacred silence follows, "Be still and know that I am God"? And this Psalm is but one of many. Psalm 24 is its equal and 65 is fully as inspiring. Then turn to Paul's testimonies, "I know whom I have believed," etc. (2 Tim. 1:12); "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," etc. (Rom. 1:16); "In all these things we are more than conquerors," etc. (Rom. 8:37-39). "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," etc. (Phil. 2:5-11). "I have fought a good fight," etc. (2 Tim. 4:7-8). Every Christian should peruse his entire Bible now and then, which will open new treasures every day.

b. Great prayers of later men. Lives that have been influenced by the Holy Spirit and have been sweetened by the Word, may show the fruits of devotional living in their prayers and thus express in helpful ways their thoughts toward God. Thomas Aquinas, whom the Roman Church still considers her greatest teacher, composed this prayer and used it before his studies:

"O ineffable Creator, who makest eloquent the tongues of babes, instruct my tongue and pour forth from my lips the

grace of Thy blessing. Grant me acuteness in understanding what I read, power to retain it, subtilty to discern its true meaning, and clearness and ease in expressing it. Do Thou order my beginnings, direct and further my progress, complete and bless my ending,—Thou who art true God and true man, living and reigning, world without end. Amen.”

Another Christian student, whose name is not given, prayed:

“O God, Inspirer and Teacher of men, who art the truth Thou lovest, send out Thy light and illumine us. Give us a deep and clear knowledge of ourselves. Help us to a growing knowledge of our world. Confirm in us the holiness of true reason. Strengthen in us the aspiration towards noble and spacious thinking. Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.”

Could a Senior express himself through these words? Or if the phrases seem too classic, are the thoughts such as Seniors might have in mind? With these prayers before the group, have suggestions for the building of their own prayer as high school students.

Here is a prayer by James Martineau, as suitable to the manual worker as to the student:

“O God, who hast commanded that none should be idle, give us grace to employ all our talents and faculties in the service appointed for us; that whatsoever our hand findeth to do we may do with our might. Cheerfully may we go in the road which thou hast marked out, not desiring too earnestly that it should be either more smooth or more wide, but daily seeking our way in Thy light, may we trust ourselves and the issue of our journey to Thee, the Fountain of joy, and sing songs of praises as we go along. Then, O Lord, receive us at the gate of life which Thou hast opened for us in Jesus Christ. Amen.”

What of the length of the sentences? Reconstruct them in shorter form. Eliminate what would not naturally spring

from Senior lips; but let them be the judges. Of course, no prayer can be written by one worshipper to convey completely the aspirations and needs of another. Should these prayers be used, either as they are, or as altered by the worshippers, then still the experiences, conditions and plans of the group, should be remembered and individual situations kept in mind.

Robert Louis Stevenson lived near the life of youth. Each evening, when during his final years he resided on the Isle of Samoa, he gathered his family and employees about him and in the twilight led them in family worship. After his death his widow collected more than a dozen prayers which he had carefully prepared. This is one of them:

“The day returns and brings us the petty rounds of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man; help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces. Let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day. Bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonoured, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep.”

Is that an evening or a morning prayer? Can a Senior express himself through it? Had Stevenson's illness anything to do with the word, “irritating”?

Could a worshipping youth make use on a Sunday morning of this prayer, which we suggest?

This is Thy day, O Lord, in all the earth. Wilt Thou be present wherever Thy word shall be brought. We pray Thee for our missionaries who are so far from their homeland. In their loneliness wilt Thou give them a taste of Thy close friendship. In weariness may they have Thy strength. Help us to take our part in the spreading of Thy kingdom. Through Jesus Christ, our Helper. Amen.

Or this on any morning:

We do not know, O Lord, what may happen during the

day; but Thou knowest. Prepare our hearts, we pray, that we may do Thy perfect will. In moments of temptation be Thou closest, O Christ, so that we may overcome, and may honour Thee in our conduct. Then shall we thank Thee from the heart. Amen.

Discuss whether "you" instead of "Thou" were more natural.

Joint Construction of the Group-Prayer

Mutual acquaintance and an understanding of individual capacities and needs are essentials of group worship. *We cannot pray together unless we think together.* Our mutual interests must be pooled and out of them arise the testimonies, confessions, praises and petitions of our hearts.

1. Previous to prayer in the Senior group there is place for *informal conversation* to bring out the central items of the united prayer. First, the minds of the group are given a chance for free expression. Is someone ill? Has a member grown indifferent? Are there plans for leaving the community? Who knows why Ted is not present? Did we meet with people during the week who had greatly different ideas about religion from us? Were there disappointments that caused doubt about a hearing Father? We are starting a new series of lessons; our evening topics require discussion and we want it to succeed. Community events are in mind,—a basketball tournament; a joint social of all the churches' young people; there are plans for weekday religious instruction, for a Vacation Church School. There are influences in the community definitely opposed to clean living and we are called to fight them; for which divine help and wisdom are indispensable. National and world enterprises concern us,—peace among nations; the spread of Christian principles; fairness in commerce; youth movements here and in other

lands; our workers at home and abroad. What shall be special items of prayer this time?

It is obvious that not all these interests can be part of one prayer or of one period of prayer. The leader must select from them, leaving freedom to the group also to select and add what appeals chiefly to them. These items will naturally form the leading motives of whatever silent and sentence prayers are part of the programme.

2. *Gather up the varied interests* of the group for the preparation of your leadership in prayer. Their ages vary from fifteen to seventeen. There are boys and girls. A few are working; most attend high school. About what are they concerned? Do they differ too greatly to pray together? It seems impossible to categorize all particular interests of each individual; but there are certain items of which we can be reasonably sure. Summing them up should help us determine whether the group can pray in unity. Use the blackboard; let the class itemize.

a. *The working boy's interests*: Wages; clothes; his work; advance; vocation; sports; amusements; associates. Perhaps also, evening school; or a girl; home. The fact that he is meeting with us suggests he has some interest in the church. This we shall take for granted in the case of each, and with it interest in this group and department of the church.

b. *The working girl's interests*: Appearance; boys; wages; advance; amusements; girl-friends; home; church; Senior group and department; future.

c. *The high school boy's interests*: Athletics; clothes; allowance; associates; perhaps girls; studies; advance; vocation; the Senior group and department.

d. *The high school girl's interests*: Appearance; studies; athletics; boys; allowance; girl-friends; the Senior department, group; church; plans for the future.

For particulars, the list is much larger. The leader does wise to have items from the Seniors themselves, both for their satisfaction and for his own. But is the above list representative? Does it mean that these four constituencies can pray together, each feeling the prayer is his? Their range of years is three. Surely, it were extremely dangerous to include a wider range. But pool the interests that are similar and compare them with those that differ. If identical interests predominate, then it would seem that our Seniors may helpfully worship together.

3. *Map out the main items* that will form the substance of the prayer or prayers for this meeting *and write them out*. Many interests require delicate phrasing; or their mention will mean harm. Most boys care for girls and practically all girls of that age care for the boys. Inasmuch as this forms a leading interest during young life, it will constitute a vital part of a youth's prayer; else life and worship suffer separation. Whatever feeling of friendship exists between young folks is either wholesome or unwholesome. Sincere prayer regarding it will help eliminate the unwholesome and foster the wholesome aspects of love-affairs, to hold up this interest before God serves to see its true meaning in life. Which is equally true of athletics, and amusements, and success in studies, and possession and handling of money. The phrasing of these sentiments in such a way that trivial notions are unthought of, and that the essential sacredness of life and all its relationships are sensed, demands thorough thinking and skilful wording. "Writing maketh a clear man."

During one of the Summer Conferences we had a class of high school students in "Devotional Leadership," and were also appointed to give the Vesper Messages, including the devotional period. Preparatory to one evening service, we asked the class what subjects should, in view of theme and situation, enter into the prayer. Agreement was reached on

three or four points, and the class was requested to write brief prayers on these central items. They handed in their papers; we discussed them and offered suggestions. They were warned not to memorize these prayers, but to think them through most prayerfully. That evening, after the reading of the Scriptures, we said, "Our young people will now lead us in prayer." One after another they prayed. Silence fell on the entire group. A deep impression became palpable. Clear and thoughtful was each prayer; brief and direct. Many encouraging comments were made afterward by fellow-worshippers; for the experience was unique. We frankly gave inquirers the secret of success: there had been genuine preparation, hence the inspiring results.

4. *One class* in a Sunday school department *may jointly compose a prayer*. The leader can gather sentences from every member and personally compose an integrated prayer from these; or leave that also to the group. But each member of the group should make a contribution; so that the prayer is in part of his own making. The prayer may then be used in class, or in the worship programme of the larger group; also in the Senior session and the club. To use this same prayer frequently would deprive others of similar expression and soon render this prayer mechanical. Preferably, another prayer will shortly be built, expressive of other phases of the worshippers' experiences and hopes.

5. The season for silent and sentence prayer requires *careful direction*. Jesus instructed His disciples regarding matters for which they might pray,—labourers to be sent into the harvest field; watchfulness, lest surprise carries them off their feet; clement weather during a flight in prospect. So the leader needs to instruct the group; lest emptiness prevails instead of worship. The theme may be called to mind; the special interests recounted; searching of hearts urged; the immediate presence of Christ assured. The

Committee on Worship may notice that the same persons repeat the same sentence prayers each session, being caught in a fatal rut. To lead them out of it through the holding up of other interests is among the most useful functions of that committee.

6. For the securing of co-operation in prayer, the leader may at rare occasions pray clause by clause, using his own words, or couplets of a prayer-hymn, or Scripture prayer-verses, and pausing between clauses to let the group express themselves through the same words. This can be done reverently only after discussion of items. At other times he may put the items informally in words, so that they become suggestions for the group, which silently prays along the lines thus indicated. The prayer may then close with brief sentences spoken by the leader or with a Scripture prayer known to all. A prayer may be read in concert from a mimeographed sheet, or from a Psalter or a Prayer-Book. Or the leader starts a familiar prayer-hymn in which all join.

7. A *prayer-hymn* offers co-operative worship which is attained with extreme difficulty any other way. Great souls did once express themselves through these vehicles of worship; these same vehicles prove helpful to us. The sense of spontaneity enhances, when no announcement is made and the leader breaks into a song, in which the group will follow, if the hymn is familiar.

8. There are private interests and items that do not form suitable subjects for group prayer; those who participate in audible group-worship must *think of others* rather than themselves. The majority of Bible prayers, particularly those outside the Psalter, such as prayers of Abraham, Moses, Nehemiah and Daniel, are intercessory. Self is sunk on behalf of the group. Certainly, the most intimate relationships of the individual are brought before God only privately, as purely between man and his Maker.

9. *There is no leading in prayer unless there is a following in prayer.* To ask a stranger to lead in prayer creates an impassé. "A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of a stranger." Nor are they likely to follow one they know by name, who does not know their thoughts and tendencies. The deacon or elder who happens along is probably not ready to lift young hearts into divine presence. United prayers issue from united hearts; they do not spring from heterogeneous minds.

Prayer Materials for the Group

As the individual needs enrichment in material he would use in worship, so does the group. A chapter each will be devoted to our rich thesaurus of Scripture, and to sacred hymns and other literature. Suffice it to call attention to outstanding sources now.

1. *All the interests of the group*, as presented to God, make centres of prayer. Whatever Bible or other prayers we select, must pass this measurement: they must express today's human experience in the presence of God; so that through them the modern youth is able to give vent to his deepest religious feelings and aspirations.

2. Scripture and other material may serve to introduce our own phrases, similar to them, growing out of them, and translating our most intimate needs into the language of the heart. *We dare not let our soul depend on the language of others for every utterance Godward*; for the doors of our hearts must open immediately to Him. The prayer of the individual or of the group is the centre of a life of worship.

*"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.*

*"Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.*

*"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath;
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death.
He enters heaven with prayer.*

*"O Thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod.
Lord, teach us how to pray!"*

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. How did prayers we find in the Bible originate and how could they be preserved? Were they prepared before they were written? Before they were prayed? In either case, what does that mean to us in preparing a worship programme?
2. Exchange reasons among students for favouring or dis-favouring preparation of prayer, specially from those who can speak from experience. If testimony from adolescent participation can be produced, that should be most valuable.
3. Elicit personal difficulties in the matter of ruts in private and public worship and consider ways out.
4. Pass in review, possibly by means of blackboard, various phases of divine Trinity that may be contemplated in prayer. Would such contemplation aid an adolescent in worship?
5. How does the Bible help us to remain vital in prayer? Nature? Biographies? Literature?
6. Consider ways by which the prayer life of youth may be strengthened. Should we advise self-examination?
7. Have quotations of prayer material from the Bible; from hymnody; from other literature, and discuss their respective purposes.
8. Assign the writing out of prayer that might suit adolescents, for morning, meals, and evening. Preparatory to

this task show in columns on the blackboard varied interests that will naturally determine their prayer-subjects.

9. Having selected a suitable theme for Senior age, construct four or five prayer items around which a prayer will naturally be built.
10. Ask for voluntary reports on difficulties in following others in prayer and study reasons.
11. If there is time, have assignment discussed, relative to integrating work and worship; otherwise these papers should be examined privately, with further discussion a following period.

REFERENCES: *A Students' Philosophy of Religion*, Wright, Ch. XVI. *The Religious Consciousness*, Pratt, Ch. VI. *Varieties of Adolescent Experience*, Mudge, Ch. I.

IX

USE OF SCRIPTURE MATERIALS IN WORSHIP

THE sacred scriptures of peoples everywhere present in written form their experiences in the spiritual realm; their attempts to find contact with God or with the gods, and the results they believed to have attained. And who shall deny their success? "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35). Among the Omaha Indians, the boy of thirteen was taken up on the mountain to remain there three days and nights. At midnight of the third day, having fasted thus far, he cried out, "Great Spirit, naked and needy, here I stand. Take my hand!" Did the Spirit hear him?

Yet, in actual life the American Indian behaved as if the Great Spirit were far away. In British India the native worshipper is more contemplative than we are; but God to him—as to the Christian Scientist among us—is not a person. He is an immense *it*; the sum-total of the universe of which the worshipper himself is part, so that he also is part of God. He may even flatter himself with the idea of himself being God. It becomes a question, then, whether one can have sweet communion with himself. The Moslem, on the contrary, worships a personal God of arbitrary character,—an Arab Sheik exalted to the *n*th power. Such a God can scarcely be thought of in terms of a companion. From all these religions we possess sacred literature, portions of which are edifying; but they require endless culling. Besides, arising from a civilization so different from ours,

these prayers do not so truly convey the thoughts of our hearts.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have passed through severe selective processes. The Hebrews, at least as early as Ezra, cast out whatever writings did not agree with the Decalogue. Through the centuries till after the coming of Christ they continued their critical studies. In like manner the early Christian Fathers rejected and accepted Gospels and Epistles according to the standards set by the life and teachings of Christ, together with the background of the Old Testament. Thus has our Bible come to us through divine providence filled with rich treasures, gathered through many centuries from lives that had definite relationships with God. There is no other book so saturated with divine revelation and with human aspirations Godward.

The meaning of those holy messages endures, because both divine and human nature remain alike through the ages. However greatly environment may change, man's reactions to his environment are due to his native equipment. The hopes, the longings, and the disappointments of individuals are essentially of a kind always and everywhere; therefore the loftiest phrases in which hearts long ago expressed themselves are to our day great highways for our souls. We may still say to God, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" In a yet more spiritual way, we can say what was said three thousand years ago by one who sensed divine presence, "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me; thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising." Then the question arises, Are these great expressions possible vehicles for our Seniors?

Had the whole Bible been written by mature minds, it might nevertheless be useful for those younger. Most text-

books now successfully used by our schools were written by grown-ups. But our sacred materials were not all written by adults. David was young when he started on his musical and literary career. Certainly the nineteenth Psalm and the twenty-third came out of his shepherd life. Solomon calls himself a child that knows not how to go out or to come in. Isaiah began young; so did Jeremiah. Hosea was unmarried when God commissioned him, and in the Orient that usually means youth. Jesus was twelve when He uttered His famous saying, "Did you not know I must be in my Father's business?" and scarce thirty when He began His ministry. His outlook on life was that of youth. And what of writers who could say, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up"? No middle-aged person would say that.

The messages of the Bible are addressed to various ages, with parts that have youth rather prominently in mind. Psalms 34 and 72, Proverbs, Canticles, Timothy and Titus were specially written for young people. Stories of Joseph at seventeen, of Samuel at fourteen, and of Daniel and his companions around fifteen, come close to the lives of our Seniors. Altogether, because of the forward look and the sense of ultimate victory, our best-known sacred writings are essentially youth literature. To steep oneself in them guarantees resistance against the backward tendencies of an ageing mind.

There is a further twofold service our Scriptures can render youth. They form a mirror for the soul and a window toward heaven. To read the story of the sinless Christ arouses a sense of imperfection and a desire to be like Him. No man can be satisfied with self in His presence. With Peter we all say, "I am a sinful man." But in the wake of this sense of sin comes the vision of Christ, the Redeemer from sin. The humble heart goes out to Him for help in

the holy purpose of reaching up toward that matchless height. But is not this prayer? So it comes about that the perusal of the Bible evokes worship. And the more one masters it, the deeper that sense takes root, of the need of a Christ who lived to show us how to live, and who died to give us living power for following Him.

The value of God's Word, then, is not merely in the words we learn to love, but more yet in the principles of life that lie underneath the words. The use of the Bible as worship material implies the mastering of certain phrases and passages, but more yet the tasting of great spiritual principles for which they stand. Neither by itself furnishes completely what our sacred writings have to offer. We need words, facts and principles.

Finding Worship Material in the Bible

To term the entire Bible a Manual of Worship would be stretching a point. Whole sections prove unusable, though the ejaculations and sighs Godward we unexpectedly find among them show how every act and thought of the writer is so constantly related to God that among leading Bible characters life itself is prayer. Nevertheless, we would not turn to genealogies, ceremonial laws, curses, or even to some of the stories, for worship materials. It is ours to select; which always means also to reject. In thus selecting we shall keep in mind both our personal needs for private worship and our devotional preparation and co-operation with the group.

1. *Incidents that reveal divine presence in every-day life*,—Enoch walking with God (Gen. 5:22); Abraham standing by Him under the Mamre oak-tree and going out with Him on the road (Gen. 18); Gideon threshing wheat in the wine-press and there conversing with the "Angel of Jehovah" (Judges 6); the men of Emmaus walking by the wayside

and sitting down to supper with the risen Christ (Luke 24); Paul enjoying comradeship with the Son of God on the storm-tossed ship (Acts 27:23, 24).

2. *Outstanding experiences of divine visitations with men*,—Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22), seeing a ladder that connects earth with heaven, and later wrestling with the angel (Gen. 32:24-30); Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3), growing conscious that God is there, and afterward watching God pass by (Ex. 33:11-23); Manoah and his wife meeting with One who calls Himself “Wonderful” (Judges 13), and tells of the birth of Samson; Joshua meeting with the “Captain of the host” (Josh. 5:13-15); Isaiah in the temple beholding the glory of God (Isa. 6); John at Patmos hearing the voice and seeing the Son of Man in the midst of the golden candlesticks (Rev. 1).

Such passages should be read quietly, and ruminated over until the picture stands out clear, and the underlying principle is understood. Then the recurrence of the same event in modern life and in altogether different form may be considered. How does God appear these days? Tolstoy, in *Where Love Is, There Is God*, and Jesus in the parable of “The sheep and the goats” (Matt. 25), suggest one way. Mary Slessor of Calabar, and Dan Crawford, in *Thinking Black*, suggest another way.

“God is not dumb that he should speak no more.
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
And findest not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor.”

3. *Distinct messages that foreshadow Christ*. Chief among them are:

a. *Promises of the coming of Christ*. The Protevangel, “I will put enmity,” etc. (Gen. 3:15). The promise to Abraham, oft repeated, “I will bless thee and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). Jacob’s

blessing, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah," etc. (Gen. 49:10). Baalam's prophecy, from the heights of Moab, "There shall come a star out of Jacob," etc. (Num. 24:17). "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata," etc. (Micah 5:2).

Such promises do not verbally serve for worship material, but they help greatly to get in the spirit of worship through Christ.

b. The Messianic promises in which Christ is appropriated or described. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Psa. 2:7, 8). "The Lord said unto my Lord," etc. (Psa. 110:1), quoted by Jesus and applied to Himself. "For unto us a child is born," etc. (Isa. 9:6, 7). "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse," etc. (Isa. 11:1-10). "A bruised reed shall he not break," etc. (Isa. 42:1-4), applied by Matthew to Jesus. "He is despised and rejected of men," etc. (Isa. 53:3-9), explained by Philip to the Ethiopian as referring to Jesus. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psa. 22:1), spoken by Jesus on the cross. "They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture" (Psa. 22:18), enacted by the soldiers around the cross. "The Lord is my shepherd," etc. (Psa. 23), appropriated by Jesus in John 10.

These writings lend themselves readily to incorporation in worship, especially in their season. For instance, "We rejoice, our Father, that the promise has been fulfilled, 'Unto us a child is born,' " etc. "Our Saviour, we come to thee with confidence, for 'A bruised reed thou shalt not break.' " Or, "Thou canst sympathize with us, O Christ, for thou wert despised and rejected of men."

4. *Experiences of Jesus that bring Him close to us as the Son of man*, who can sympathize with us. Some of these we do well to memorize. "There were in the same country shepherds," etc. (Luke 2:8-14). It seems incredible that good Christian people can let Christmas pass after Christ-

mas without making that message their own. "Ye are my friends," etc. (John 15:14-17). "Let this mind be in you," etc. (Phil. 2:5-8). "In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren," etc. (Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15, 16).

5. *Experiences of Christ that help us turn to Him as our divine Redeemer.* "In the beginning was the Word," etc. (John 1:1-4). "I am the door," etc. (John 10:9-11). "I am the vine," etc. (John 15:1-10). "Let not your heart be troubled," etc. (John 14:1-9). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" etc. (Rom. 8:35-39). "Looking unto Jesus," etc. (Heb. 12:2). "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13:8). "For God so loved the world," etc. (John 3:16).

6. *The great promises for daily living.* "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33:25). "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27). "Every place that the soul of thy foot shall tread upon, that have I given thee" (Josh. 1:3). "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee," etc. (Isa. 43:2). "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all liberally," etc. (Jas. 1:5). We have chosen these few from separate parts of the Bible to show the wide range we have at our disposal. To obtain the real meaning of these promises we must read them together with their setting; for quoted by themselves they cannot fully convey their message. They should be memorized and frequently reviewed. Then, when we lift our voice in prayer, whether audibly or in silence, these great freewill offerings of God leap involuntarily to our lips to render praying easier. Divine promises were given us to plead before God; He wants us to talk them over with Him, and so to live that we can claim them. They breathe divine forgiveness; they offer help; they give direction on the way; they point to heights that can be climbed by taking the hand of Christ.

7. *The great benedictions.* The Aaronic benediction stands out with eminence, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee," etc. (Num. 6:24-26). Others we have already mentioned. Isaiah 40:29-31 is particularly fitting for young people; Psalm 121, specially the last two verses, when one is about to leave the community. May we add 1 Pet. 5:10; Heb. 13:20, 21; Psa. 125:1, 2; Prov. 3:5, 6; Psa. 19:12-14; Heb. 12:1, 2.

8. *Invitations to worship.* "Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. . . . O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psa. 96:7-9). "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God" (Psa. 95:6, 7).

These two gems are types of numerous verses and passages, to be found in Psalms 24, 95, 96, 98, 100, 103, 105, 107, 111, 113, 117, 122, 127, 135, 136, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150. Almost invariably the first two or three verses of a Psalm are most suitable; but such Psalms as 24, 100, and from 146 to 150 are completely available.

9. *Testimonies in the spirit of prayer.* The sources of our prayer materials grow well-nigh unlimited when, in speaking to God, we learn to make use of utterances regarding God. The original speakers so deeply enjoyed divine presence that they could not keep silent; they felt compelled to tell others. Psalms 46, 91, 100, 103 and 116 are outstanding examples. Let us appropriate them. "I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplication" (Psa. 116:1), is, obviously, testimony; that is, talking about God. But, "I love thee, Lord, because thou hast heard my voice and my supplication," is prayer; that is, talking to God. It is a reconstruction of the Scripture testimony. "God is our refuge and strength," etc., is testimony. "O God, thou art our refuge and strength" is prayer. Much of this testimony we

need not change; but where we do change we need be cautious. "He preserveth" becomes "Thou preservest," which from many papers we have examined of students in this course appears to be difficult of construction. "You preserve" is simpler and perfectly proper. In teaching this course we suggest assignment of several Psalms for reconstruction from testimony into prayer. It helps the student to get steeped in the spirit of prayer construction, with materials on hand for building.

10. *Prayers.* Outside the Psalter, prayers may here and there be found. The converse which Abraham held with God on behalf of Lot (Gen. 18) is prayer. Jacob prays humbly (Gen. 32) when Esau approaches him. The intercession of Moses on behalf of Israel, offering himself in their stead (Ex. 32:31, 32), is the highest form of intercessory prayer; it is vicarious. Nehemiah, ch. 1:5-11, and Daniel, ch. 9:4-19, breathe a similar spirit. Though neither was in any wise guilty of sin to bring about the captivity of their people, they made confession of sin as fellow-sinners with all Israel. They identified themselves with their people for whom they prayed; which is the essence of all sympathetic prayer. In his epistles Paul makes his readers feel that he is praying *for* them and *with* them. We can take lessons from Paul. But the Psalter is our richest source of prayer material; in a sense its entire content is prayer.

a. The choicest Psalms start out as testimony but end as prayer. "The heavens declare the glory of God," exclaims the author of the nineteenth Psalm. Toward the close he prays, "Cleanse thou me from hidden faults," and goes on to the end with petition. If you took up Psalm 116 as suggested, you saw a similar procedure. "I love the Lord" forms the beginning. "O Lord, truly I am thy servant" comes later. Psalm 119 opens with exhortation. "Blessed are the undefiled," but for only three verses; all the rest is

directly addressed to God. Tenderest is The Shepherd Psalm, not thought of by most as a prayer. It is too frequently "Repeated." But the third verse says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Is not that real prayer? May we never again "repeat" that sacred utterance! It was composed to be prayed.

b. The heart may turn to God with *prayers exactly as we find them* in the Bible; for instance, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth; who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength," etc. (Psa. 8), from which Jesus quoted when boys and girls sang to Him, and scribes and Pharisees demanded silence. Or, "God be merciful to us and bless us and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth; thy saving health among all nations," etc. (Psa. 67). No nearer equal of The Lord's Prayer can be found anywhere; every enthusiast for missions ought to pray it. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations," etc. (Psa. 90), is called "The Prayer of Moses," and it fits him well. Some of us like to use it specially on the final day of the year; but it serves for other occasions. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me," etc. (Psa. 139), is a matchless expression of the sense of divine presence.

Many other prayers are at our disposal in our sacred writings. Let us use them! It has helped us in their use to have memorized those parts which we thought Jesus Himself might quote. In this wonderful 139th Psalm we find, "Shall I not hate them, Lord, that hate thee," etc. This we do not include in our prayer, remembering that Elijah was heard when he prayed for fire on men sent out to arrest him; but Jesus rebuked John and James who felt like invoking simi-

lar punishment. The coming of our Redeemer has actually meant salvation.

(1) *Offering dedications.* These need not be confined to Scripture. In the next chapter dedicatory hymns will be suggested. The leader may and sometimes should compose his own prayer of dedication. But much Bible material is available, of which we indicate a few portions. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," etc. (Psa. 24:1). "Thou desirest not sacrifice . . . the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," etc. (Psa. 51:15-17). "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it," etc. (Psa. 65), which may, part by part, be used almost completely. "Honour the Lord with thy substance," etc. (Prov. 3:9, 10). "If thou turn away thy foot on my sabbath," etc. (Isa. 58:13, 14). "Unto us a child is born," etc. (Isa. 9:6, 7). "They shall not hurt nor destroy," etc. (Isa. 11:9). "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord," etc. (Micah 6:6-8). "Ye are the salt of the earth," etc. (Matt. 13:16). "Lay not up for yourselves treasures," etc. (Matt. 6:19-21). "Ask and it shall be given you," etc. (Matt. 7:7-11). "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," etc. (Matt. 6:30-33). "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them," etc. (Matt. 7:24-27). "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," etc. (Rom. 12:1, 2). "Upon the first day of the week," etc. (1 Cor. 16:2, 13, 14). "For we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. (2 Cor. 8:9, 12). "The fruit of the Spirit is love," etc. (Gal. 5:22, 23). "We brought nothing into this world," etc. (1 Tim. 7:12). "Every good gift and every perfect gift," etc. (Jas. 1:17, 22, 27).

Assign one of those passages to individuals, or more than one to a group, designating the session in which use is expected of it. Have the verse or verses noted in the written programme, to be used in an emergency; but know who is

responsible and call on him if present. The passage should not be read, but spoken from memory; though the Bible may be kept open during the speaking, if there is fear of stumbling.

(2) *Responses*. Because of their general availability, as well as their power, the Scripture responses afford a helpful element in the worship programme. Most song-books and all hymnals contain them; so that we need not quote many. Let it suffice to indicate some passages that are rarely quoted, and to suggest a Biblical use which may apply to the majority of them. Joshua 1:3-9; Proverbs 3:1-7; Psalm 119:1-11; Proverbs 4:4-18; 13:1-6; Micah 6:6-8; Luke 2:40-51; Acts 2:41-47; Romans 12:1, 2, 9-21; 1 Corinthians 12:15-28; 13:1-8; Ephesians 4:1-6, 11-16; Philippians 2:1-13; 4:4-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:15-23.

Psalm 24, just as it has come to us, shows how responses were used successfully among the Hebrews. The mechanical procedure in our departments, by which often the leader reads one verse and the group the next verse, becomes deadening. Look at this Psalm, immediately following and growing out of the Shepherd Psalm. The Ark of the Covenant, wickedly neglected, is being brought into Jerusalem. The carrying priests are approaching the gate, which is still closed but can be lifted by means of chains and ballasts. Thousands from all Palestine have come to witness the event and to participate. They have learned the hymn of this Triumphal Entry, written by David. Together, the whole multitude acknowledges God (vs. 1, 2). Then arises the query from the priests (vs. 3), and the answer comes from one group among them (vs. 4, 5). A clear tenor rings out (vs. 6), addressed to "God of Jacob," which means, "our fathers' God." The marching priests are drawing nearer the closed gate. "Lift up your heads," they challenge. But from the walls there comes the counter-challenge, "Who is

this king of glory?" To which priests and people below respond (vs. 8), and the demand to open is repeated in no uncertain tones. Another challenge from the walls; then the response from every side and every throat, "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." Lifted are the gates and the jubilant throng streams in.

Each passage of the Bible came out of a particular experience and conveys its own message; its aim and use, therefore, will differ from that of another passage. But one law rules all responsive reading: the response must rise from hearts touched by the message. To secure this sincere response requires a study both of the passage and of the group that will participate. Individuals might be chosen to study and help carry out the meaning. A stanza of a hymn may be interspersed to heighten the intended effect. Part of the passage may be used as prayer. Occasionally, the entire section is best recited by the leader; or by members in turn. Certainly, the choicest meaning of a Scripture message can come to the fore only after a mastery of it that frees participants from the bondage of the printed page.

Preparing to Use Scripture Materials

Rarely does a worship period come to its close without the reading or recital of some Scripture. Even more rarely has that Scripture passage been duly prepared. What does it mean to read or recite such a passage? Take Isaiah 55:3, "Incline your ear and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live." The prophet appeals to his people in the name of God. He knows that if the listeners will come, they shall find a Father who cares. He also knows that if they will not come, they are walking to their destruction. Earnestly he pleads with his people, as a man would plead who saw friends walking headlong toward a jutting cliff. When Isaiah spoke those words his whole soul was in them.

When we today select the same words, we represent Isaiah; we represent God once more, in whose name the prophet spoke. How, then, dare we read such immortal utterances without first putting ourselves in the heart of that chapter and reliving the scenes of long ago? Then we must discover in how far conditions today are of a kind with those in which Isaiah found himself. For we should not employ this passage did we feel that it does not apply.

1. *Much private reading is needful* to get ourselves into the required mood. A Bible Dictionary or other work presenting life and customs of Scripture days will be consulted. History and biography should be studied, whereby the message gets its setting. Previous and following chapters have their bearing on our passage. The devotional message needs to reach our own hearts first; else, how can we convey it to others! We must find the leading subject in this passage, and the purpose that occasioned it. Not seldom a parsing of sentences proves helpful to show various phases of the message and the unity that binds these together.

2. *Audible reading in private* needs to precede reading in the group. Consider again this fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah; it serves as well as any. Read the first verse audibly. What does "Ho" mean? Would our "Hello" correspond to it? Or our "Just a moment"? This is evidently a cordial invitation. Read Isaiah 53:1 audibly and compare it with ch. 55:1. How do they differ? Omit vs. 4, 5 in ch. 55; they are somewhat in parenthesis. Read vs. 6, which carries on the appeal of vs. 3. As you go through the rest of the chapter you find clusters of thought, each related to the other, yet every two or three verses forming their own units, therefore requiring a different mode of reading. Verse 7 belongs with 6, as part of the appeal. Verses 8-9 compare God's way of thinking with ours, to our disadvantage so far as our pride goes; but for our good because of divine grace. Verses

10-11 offer assurance to every representative of God who brings His Word. Then comes the climax of promise for those who have heard and heeded the invitation.

In this private reading, observe punctuations; they have a purpose. Read Luke 2:16 audibly for practice. Most likely you will find three persons in the manger if you are careless of punctuations. Note contrasts, too. Take Matthew 25, either or all of its three parables, and as you read, watch whether you express the contrasts so clearly intended. Practice this critical, audible reading, noting the varied emotions they call out. Learn to look away from the page to the group. You take the author's place; you are now bringing that same message. If you fail to secure attention, the message is lost. Audible reading in private is required two or three times previous to reading before the group.

3. *With the group, carry the message as you felt it in private.* You are God's messenger for this occasion; else you must not undertake to read His Word. Seven to ten verses are usually enough to retain attention. Look at individuals in the group; not on the page except you must. Speak with the conviction you have gained in preparation. Beware of slurring words; they are lost. It may be necessary to interpret sentences. Make sure of their meaning and aid their understanding. Be reverent as if in prayer;—which does not mean being sad. This forms part of worship; the message comes from God. You worshipped in your room when thinking on these sayings; help your group now to worship with you. They will, if you are in the right spirit.

It will prove uncommonly helpful to memorize outstanding verses and passages. Many you have *almost* mastered; a few more efforts will make them yours. Keep the Bible open before you if needful; but speak direct wherever possible. This is the time for worship; your aim is through

these Scriptures to aid the group in their devotions. You would not customarily read a prayer *to* them if you expected them to pray *with* you; the prayer would not be felt as a spontaneous expression. This in a measure is true as well of the reading of a Scripture passage to the group. If it can be spoken without any reference to the printed page, so much the better, presuming you have it well in hand. Where this seems too strenuous, you must familiarize yourself with words and meaning until only occasional reference needs to be made to the page. After mastering and using the choicest portions of the Bible, you soon discover that the same passage proves serviceable for much more than one occasion.

Mastering Scripture Worship Materials

What never was "*membered*," or made a member of oneself, cannot very well be *re-membered*. We must feel and live through a worship passage, shall we pray it. Then we must use it verbally and apply its principles to our behaviour.

1. *Before memorizing a passage, ask where it belongs.* Is it praise, adoration, petition, thanksgiving, confession? Classify it. The poet said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." How was he to guard against forgetting? He categorized those benefits. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities," that's one kind. "Who healeth all thy diseases," that's another kind. "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction," that's a third. "Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies," that makes four kinds. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good; thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Which constitutes a series of five distinct ways in which God blesses. Then the poet took a harp, composed a tune, and sang those five declarations. How could he ever forget them? They remained at his disposal for that many situations in life.

2. *Re-member.* Think over materials previously mastered. So easily we forget. Those, who seem to retain well, observe the law of repetition. They member and remember. Else, what was gained with effort is lost with ease. Each day is punctuated with open moments, when we may call to mind some of those inspiring messages that wing the soul upward in prayer.

3. *Employ acquired materials at every opportunity.* Children, during their period of word-acquisition, grab every new word as soon as they can master it and use that word over and over. Thus it becomes part of their vocabulary, if it proves useful; otherwise they drop it. Only through use may we truly taste the meaning of sacred language,—praying and living it.

4. *Scripture memory work should be continued through the Senior years.* Juniors memorize more readily, because they reason less and worry not at all. Seniors have stronger minds for memorizing. But these choice passages must not be drilled; that would rob them of their sacredness. Frequently they may be used for responsive readings; then the request made to master them privately. Not all members of the group will follow out the suggestion; but if the leader and the Programme Committee will do so, enough volume is guaranteed for audible joint use; while individual use in the group also is growing more assured.

There is a Norse legend that long ago the earth was silent; not a creature on it possessed voice. Then God took pity and sent an angel to sing. Ducks were wabbling toward the creek; they learned to quack. Dogs were chasing on the trail; they barked. Sparrows hopped from branch to branch; they began to chirp. But sky-lark and nightingale sat silent; they learned to sing. As for man, he stood upright, listening with both ears, drinking in the song of the angel. He mastered the language of heaven.

"O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me; thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high. I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presense? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in the grave, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely, the darkness shall cover me,' even the night shall be light about me.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."—Psalm 139:1-11, 23, 24.

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Draw from the class more than one reason why prayers of pagans do not serve us for use in worship. It were well to read a few of the choicest. They are available at the public library.
2. Ask for passages from the Bible that were helpful during the adolescent years. If reasons are added, such contributions are extremely valuable.
3. Gather opinions from the group regarding age of authors of passages they liked and determine in how far they are correct.
4. The meaning of passages for worship, now and in earlier years; reasons.
5. Read Psalm eight and ask for discovery of a petition. Have the Shepherd Psalm spoken by one who feels its meaning and let the class decide whether it is a prayer. Note the transition in the nineteenth Psalm from testimony to prayer.
6. Have members of the class read Psalm forty-six and

show how readily it can be transformed into a prayer. Such changing may be assigned for home-work.

7. Appoint two or three to open the next class session with a Bible prayer, each a different one, and none reading it.
8. Consider reasons why literature written two millenniums or more back is still so vital today. Apply reasons to the situation of the adolescent groups.
9. Discuss helpful ways of mastering Scripture passages, privately and in the group. Decide on most promising materials for adolescent memory work.
10. Practice various ways of responsive Scripture reading and have the majority decide which seems most effective. Note sincerity, expression, heartiness, and reverence of participants.
11. Assign the selecting of a Call to Worship, an Offering Dedication, and a benediction from the Bible, to be written and handed in.

REFERENCES: *A Book of Biblical Devotions*, Moffatt. *Scripture Memory Work*, Verkuyl. *Psalms and Other Sacred Writings*, Eiselen.

X

USE OF HYMNODY AND OTHER LITERATURE

MORE time and energy is devoted in group devotions to singing than to all other forms of worship combined. The physical exercise for which song calls; the joy of co-operation inducing the sense of unity; the stir of the better hymns; the opportunity for self-expression; the rhythmic measures that harmonize the inner soul at its best with itself as well as with the laws of the body,—all these elements and many more enter in to render song an acceptable vehicle of the soul in worship. It seems highly probable that in the long ago prayers were chanted before they were spoken. Through all the changes of customs and traditions song has held its own as a way of worship. The true results of worship, therefore, will depend greatly on the right use of sacred song.

Why Do We Sing?

We do well to ask ourselves occasionally the reason for what we do, and song need not form an exception. Why raise the voice above the pitch of conversation, use the words written by another, follow directions of a tune, and sustain sentence after sentence in obedience with given directions? This is not the way of song-birds; for they give vent to their feelings through music which none made for them. Their singing is wholly and happily expressive of their nature. Perhaps, the genius who writes our music and the poet who composes hymnody feel as free and natural as song-birds. But this is scarce true of us who jointly sing a given hymn.

Why should we indulge in such practice? To come to particulars, why may a leader announce to the group, say, "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come"?

Frankly, most leaders could not give vital reasons. It seems customary to sing in a religious meeting, and why go contrary to custom? Besides, more members of the group can be counted on to participate in singing more than in any other part of the programme, so it is safest. While they are singing, they are not so likely to engage in irrelevant occupation, so that singing fosters discipline. And mayhap these songs will mean something to the singers some day. Are not these reasons sufficient? They have some weight; but it seems questionable whether we may use God's name and the sacred products of human genius for purposes for which they were not intended. We are admonished to "sing with the spirit and sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15). The notions quoted above hardly suffice to ask a group to sing "Joy to the World," or any other sacred song.

1. The first reason for singing this particular hymn, "Joy to the World," must surely be that "The Lord has come," and that His coming does mean enough joy to the world to be worth singing about. *Song is an effective vehicle of expression; it is heart language set to tune.* We are glad Christ came; we reveal our gladness in song. Ideally, just as we speak our usual thoughts in sentences of our own composing, we might sing only the songs we wrote. But actually, lacking this power of poetic and musical expression, we turn to vehicles prepared by others and that approach our own joys and longings most closely.

2. A second reason for group singing is that *it unites us*. This is true of all joint singing. Hayrack experiences of a generation ago were noisy but genuine witnesses of such comradeships. Listen to someone speaking, and you have ample opportunity to agree or to disagree; but sing with him

and you try to be in harmony with him. Joint singing means joint thinking, joint feeling and joint purposing,—presuming the song is big enough to evoke all that. Whole nations have been welded together through their own strong, national songs. Young people of many denominations have felt “The tie that binds,” when together voicing our Christian hymns.

3. The third and greatest reason for sacred hymnody is that we shall *express our hearts Godward*. Songs may deal with any subject; but hymns must relate us to God. Like Scripture passages, they may exhort, or bear witness, or praise, or express penitence, or breathe a sense of divine presence, or voice petition, or even formulate divine teaching; but by one criterion they stand or fall as hymns,—the relating of life to God. Study the song-book you have by this canon. Find its prayers. If it lacks these, call it a song-book; for it is not a hymnal. Most likely the book used in your church services is richer in prayer-expression than the book now in the hands of the Senior group; unless the Music Committee made careful selection. Song-books left in communities by leaders in revivals,—who incidentally made some money on their sales,—will hardly serve the souls of Seniors to waft their spiritual experiences and longings Godward.

What Shall We Sing?

The nature of our sacred songs is determined by *our* nature; that is, by our needs, experiences and capacities. Having agreed that our singing must serve our expressional life, we shall more readily agree also on the quality and scope of our vehicles for such expression.

1. *Sincerity*. Whatever else a hymn may contain or lack, this is a basic requirement. Our singing must not be that of hypocrites. Which does not mean that no song may be

loftier than we are; for our sacred language in music must also challenge us by its ideals. The hymn that makes us ashamed of ourselves is a godsend. Sing it with the prayer that those heights may be climbed. "I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go, Dear Lord," may thus be sung by every earnest young Christian. But if that youth has decided he will not leave this country, whatever call may come, then beware lest he perjure himself through such a hymn.

a. Seasons need consideration. One fearfully hot day in June we arrived at a country schoolhouse a minute or two late. The organist handed us the list of songs. Innocently we announced the first number on the list, then turned to the book. Imagine our consternation to read, "Let a Little Sunshine In." We had acted contrary to all rules laid down in this book. That was years ago; it taught us another lesson.

b. Age and experience must be in mind. "Jesus Bids Us Shine" will not appeal to our Senior, but "As of Old the Apostles Heard Him" may find reception. "When at Last I Come to the End of the Road" does not enthuse; "Just as I Am, Young, Strong and Free," is true to worshipping youth. There has for years been great need for a hymnal for Seniors. Such need is now being supplied. Ever search high and low for suitable Senior hymns.

c. The emotions of our Seniors deserve consideration. They are in process of change. Now they feel deeply; again they are shallow. The hymns we ask them to sing may not be in agreement with the emotions that control them, or with the sentiments they nourish. Naturally, we wish they were, so our Seniors might feel what they sing.

The question arises: Granted that at times those of high school age are very sentimental, should they be permitted to find outlets for their sentiments through sacred song? May they even vent themselves through Christian songs which do not fully meet our standards of thought and tune? We cannot

lightly set aside that question, nor can we answer it purely from our mature standpoint. Allow a recent illustration.

The song-leader, in a department of Seniors and Young People we attended, was asked from the floor for a song which seemed so sentimental that he declined to use it. When he appealed to the group for something better, many voices shouted, "The Old Rugged Cross." "Just as sentimental," he exclaimed, "but I suppose we'll have to sing it." They sang it, not as feelingly as the scene of the Crucifixion might suggest, but unanimously. The story that song portrays is central in evangelic faith. It is well for young people to remember vividly that Jesus gave His life for us. Something in the song strongly appeals to young hearts; perhaps its pathos; probably also its heroism. The song is not old, neither will it be a classic; but obviously it was a vehicle of expression for those Seniors and Young People. Again and again young people call for it, and they sing it with feeling. Let us beware lest we deprive youthful hearts from ways of worship which they both need and enjoy. Are not growing souls of more value than many rules of poetry and music?

d. A singable subject. The fact that something is true is not always sufficient reason for saying or singing it. There are truths that should not be mentioned except for scientific purposes; other verities may be discussed; but not preached. Many truths were never intended to be sung. Thoughtful selection will eliminate such songs, which should never have been written.

Here is a group of young people singing to the tops of their voices, "Ye must be born again." Let us accept the truth of that. Is it anything to sing about? If the phrase ran, "We *have* been born again," then reasons might be apparent for rejoicing. But why should we shout from the housetops to anybody that he must be born again? Can any

one do so by being admonished? Jesus spoke these tremendous words one night to a learned Jew. Never again did He mention them; not to the Samaritan woman; nor to His disciples. Nicodemus needed a shock, and received it. He found that with all his learning there were great things he did not know. Shall we take this mystic truth and make it common for no purpose?

Perhaps the criterion may also be seen by an illustration from the past. Dr. Watt has enriched the Church with truly inspiring hymns; but some we could not use today. For instance:

*“ My thoughts on awful subjects roll;
 Damnation and the dead.
What horrors seize the guilty soul
 Upon a dying bed.
Not all their anguish and their blood
 For their past guilt atones,
Nor the compassion of a God
 Shall hearken to their groans.”*

We wonder how any could heartily sing such words. But he who approvingly quotes them also writes: “Often a meeting is injured by calling on young converts to sing joyful hymns. This is highly improper in a prayer meeting. It is no time to let feeling flow away in joyful singing while so many sinners around them, and their own former companions, are going down to hell ” (Charles J. Finney).

e. Truth must be sought and accepted, whether old or new. The old hymns have the advantage of eternal worth; they have stood the test of ages. Had not human hearts found them helpful, they would long ago have sunk into oblivion. They live because they ever buoy and refresh life. Such hymns are essentially young; the elixir of youth is in them. “Fairest Lord Jesus,” perhaps from the Middle Ages; “A Mighty Fortress,” from Reformation days; “All

Hail the Power," of the eighteenth century, and "When Morning Gilds the Skies," now fourscore years of age, are as fitting today as when they were created. But new hymns deserve consideration, too,—and much more caution. They have not yet been tried, but they come up out of our own lives; they may most perfectly express our Senior's experience. "This is My Father's World," "Follow the Gleam," "I Would Be True," and "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies," are loved by this high school age because they are born from minds like theirs. They come nearest to conveying their aspirations.

f. Deceptive tunes and mixed metaphors must be banned. Just now the charm of jazz is capturing its Christian victims. Certain leaders have submitted after a struggle; others have thoughtlessly drifted. Jazz has invaded our worship. There may be room for sanctified jazz,—if these terms are not contradictory,—but there cannot be room for falsehood. Examine the song, "Love Lifted Me," and compare it with the hymn, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." The young folks sing it lustily; it is frequently called for. Hear them shout, "I was sinking deep in sin." But is that anything to shout about? Should we not rather hang our heads in shame? Sin is ugly; it grieves God and ruins man. But the tune to that line is hilarious; which means that the tune is false to the sentiment. To sing it, creates a wrong impression about sin. The words are equally untrue. "Sinking in sin." Then sin must be mire. So it is. "Far from the peaceful shore." That's water, not mire. Water is pure. "Very deeply stained within." True again, though we should not be so happy about it. But sinking in mire was the subject; now we have shifted to our inner self. As if this altering were not enough, we go on to Peter's experience on the Galilean lake, "Sinking to rise no more; but the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry." That's a whole mess of con-

traditions. I was sinking in mire. Christ is master of the sea in which I am sinking. I cry to Him in despair. Unfortunately, in real life, the person who is sinking in sin has the time of his life; he is uttering no despairing cry. He resents interference. And on this chaff churches are feeding young souls; when the Lord's barns are filled with wheat.

"Jesus, Lover of my Soul; let me to Thy bosom fly, while the nearer waters roll; while the tempest still is high," is not as suitable for Seniors as for adults, but it presents no mixed metaphors, no hilarities about a disaster. Our elders loved that hymn and it is today as hale and fresh as when it was first written. "But our Seniors like to sing 'Love Lifted Me,' and they don't like to sing, 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul,'" some glibly remark. Yes, and you like your coffee without sugar if only you train yourself that way. Our Seniors' taste for sacred hymnody is what you make it. Tell the love story from which sprang "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go," and they will sing that more genuinely than they ever sang the joyous sin-song.

2. *Sacredness.* Worship, we know, relates us to God. Our songs must be *of* God, *through* God and *to* God; else they misfit our worship. When still in college we were asked to preach at a schoolhouse among the farmers a few miles away. During the opening song-service we ventured to ask if any had a choice of hymn. A rural swain sitting beside his maiden shouted, "Number 104." We turned to it. "Well, Wife, I've Found a Model Church." It nearly floored me. That time, also, we learned a lesson. The songs we sing must convey man's loftiest thoughts of God as revealed in nature, or God's gracious devotion to man; or human relationship as children of God. Songs that lack these elements may have their place, but not in a group for worship.

a. *Nature hymnody.* As Psalm nineteen begins with nature and ends with our Redeemer, so Christian nature-songs

facilitate the worship of those who live close to nature, as do our Seniors. They can see the heavenly bodies; sunset and clouds, and are able to sense God in them. At a Summer Conference, when the lake is tinted golden, the Vesper song that rises naturally to young lips is, "Day is Dying in the West." They love it; they feel it; they worship through that song. "This is My Father's World," "Thou Who Touchest Earth with Beauty," and "Fairest Lord Jesus," make similar appeal. We can help them enjoy "Lord of All Being Throned Afar," "The Spacious Firmament on High," and other great nature hymns of the Church.

b. Prayer hymns. Young life searches for complete vocabulary. There are *longings and experiences* for which no words have as yet been found. Hymn phrases aid in spiritual expression. Our treasury of hymns is rich in prayer, for the most part youthful in spirit. "In the hour of trial, Jesus, plead for me, lest by base denial I depart from Thee," does not have to be imposed on the Senior; it is his own petition. "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me," is equally sacred to young hearts. It is no far cry from these to the petition, "Saviour, When in Dust to Thee," and the plea, "Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us," or the confession, "I Was a Wandering Sheep,"—which may be sung only in tender moments. Under true leadership the time comes when from the heart the Senior can say and sing,

*"Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm.*

Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire.

*Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm."*

With these go the hymns of *promise and consecration*. It is extremely difficult for some to arise and pledge in spoken words their loyalty to Christ. They want songs of loyalty

which they can sing with as much meaning as others can pledge in speech. They are encouraged by the fellowship of others, if the worship is sincere. To the challenge, "Who Is On the Lord's Side?" they gladly respond, "We are on the Lord's side. Saviour, we are Thine." "O Zion, Haste," appeals to them, and "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations." They may at times even yearn to exclaim, "I am Thine, O Lord," . . . "Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord." And at their best they sing from the heart, "O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end."

Nor should *the promises of God* be forgotten, particularly those of Christ. To the old Lorelei tune, we have in most hymnals a song every youth who knows it learns to love, "Far out on the desolate billow the sailor sails the sea." The miner and the soldier are remembered. With each stanza goes the refrain, "Yet never alone is the Christian, who lives by faith and prayer; for God is a Friend unfailing, and God is everywhere." Not enough use is made of Luther's great hymn, "Ein feste Burg." It has power such as our high school students admire and themselves possess. They do not fancy the appellation, "Saints of the Lord," but from the second stanza on the hymn, "How Firm a Foundation" will find their hearts. Again we have such invitations as, "I Gave My Life for Thee," and exhortations, "Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne and Thy Kingly Crown."

Thanksgiving and adoration naturally form the bulk of our hymns. "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name;" "Holy, Holy, Holy;" "When Morning Gilds the Skies;" "Angel Voices Ever Singing;" "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken;" "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand," and "Now Thank We All Our God," are typical of the great Church hymns. At present our nature hymns are the Senior's main vehicle in this category; we need more gratitude and praise songs of the better type.

3. *Idealism.* Sacred hymns should stimulate to endeavour and cause discontent with imperfection. "Rise, My Soul, and Stretch Thy Wings," is not the language of youth; but it is his innermost ambition. "O for a Closer Walk with God," is also an adult sentence; but the Senior senses something like it. Hymns are needed through which he may voice these high resolves. "True-hearted, Whole-hearted;" "I Would Be True;" "Trying to Walk in the Steps of My Saviour," may soon advance into the strain, "Lead On, O King Eternal;" "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow;" "My Life, My Love I Give to Thee." Every youth feels the thrill of "Follow the Gleam," but there can be no such advance except with Christ as Leader. The ideals of youth are awakened supremely by the vision of Jesus Christ. "Jesus Still Leads On;" "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee;" "Jesus, Lord and Master, at Thy Sacred Feet."

4. *The social urge.* Only recently have our hymn writers given vent to the Christian principle of "Others." A growing generation demands that love of God shall find dominant expression in love and service of man. "I Would Be True" is a product of this new conviction. "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life" is Biblical as well as modern. Whittier's "O Brother Man," and the anonymous poem, "*Love Thyself Last*," have been set to tunes. Laufer, editor of *The Church School Hymnal for Youth*, has enriched our social hymnody with, "We thank Thee, Lord, Thy paths of service lead to blazened heights and down the slopes of need."

How Shall We Worship in Song?

There are in the main two ways of learning,—through trial and error, and through instruction. The trial and error method neglects similar methods in the past as if nobody had ever learned before; instruction acknowledges the past,

and profits from it. Worship has been finding its way in song chiefly by the trial and error method. Each leader goes his own way, stumbles and picks himself up,—occasioning the stumbling of others who do not always pick themselves up,—and wonders why his path is strewn with so few roses. Instruction in song-leadership is due every leader of song, and suggestion for helpful singing is the birthright of every worshipper in song. The Church owes it to him.

1. *Prayerful selection.* Only at rarest intervals do we ask others to express themselves publicly in speech, and then usually through thoughts of their own creation and words of their own choosing. But for joint worship we ask the group to express themselves through thoughts of others' creation and words and tunes of *our* choosing. The hymns should, therefore, express the thoughts, emotions and desires of the group as nearly as possible. If the chosen theme has grown out of the needs of the group and the song agrees with that theme, ideal fitness may be closely approximated.

2. *Repeated previous reading.* The leader of worship needs to impart to the group the message of the chosen hymn before they sing it. He cannot do it without making that message fully his own. Who wrote it? Why was it written? What is its meaning now? What parts are most vital? Think the hymn, read it audibly, feel its emphases.

3. *Lines announced before number.* The number is purely incidental; it may not need announcing, if the hymn is well known. The words are most vital, and next to them the tune. While we are speaking the words, the tune also comes to the group's mind. The hymn then has a chance to grip them ere they sing it. They do not always need to use a song-book. But we force them to reach for a song-book when we announce nothing but the number. If no words of the song are spoken with it, the group begins the song unprepared.

4. *Purposeful participation.* This is not accomplished by saying, "Now, everybody sing!" It may be approximated by proper seating, use of suitable hymns, prepared leadership, and acquaintance with the entire group. Antiphonies prove helpful,—one section answering another section. Humming strikes responsive chords with some. Sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses deserve encouragement. Occasional stanzas and lines may be read in concert or by individuals. A stanza may be sung by one or by four, and the chorus by all. The principle needs reiteration that God alone is there to listen to the singing; the whole group is to sing to a listening God.

5. *Use of hymns for prayer.* Such hymns should, of course, be familiar, and they need to be loved. Often we can start them unannounced. Sometimes we can lead into them out of the spoken prayer. Encourage others, particularly the Worship Committee, to give this vital personal touch to the worship.

6. *Control the instruments.* From time immemorial instruments have been aids to worship if rightly applied; they have destroyed worship when indiscriminately used. Two-steps and marches were not written to aid in worship. Martial music has its own virtue. An instrument must remain an instrument for the purpose designated. Those who play instruments need imbue with the leader's worship purpose; else they will hinder and not help. Stringed instruments seem to lend themselves to worship-aids more readily than wind instruments; except the organ.

Enriching Our Repertory of Hymnody

Naturally, the home should be the first trainer in sacred song. Damrosch, the noted orchestra leader, asserts that half the American divorces would be avoided if song were popular in the American home. Let us do our part in bring-

ing it back where it belongs. The twilight lends itself so happily to family singing.

1. Be ever on the lookout for good songs. One song-book does not suffice. Gems are found in unexpected places. A "Special Programme" may offer just what particular song you need. Conferences, rallies, conventions are likely to contribute some worth-while material. The Church Hymnal is a rich treasury. Habitually search for and treasure fine hymns as a miser keeps and treasures money;—and use your finds.

2. Employ throughout the year certain immortal hymns that were first written for occasions. "O Little Town of Bethlehem" is as true and touching in September as in December. "Today He Rose and Left the Dead" suits every first day of the week. "Joy to the World" is perennial. "Now Thank We All Our God" should press for utterance often.

3. Do not overuse or abuse any hymn, however good. For some of us a few great hymns have grown unbearable so that we can no longer enter into the joyful meaning of them, because again and again we were urged to sing them. No hymn must grow too publicly common. If it greatly appeals to us, we'll do the repeating in private.

4. Frequently sing without song-books. It is well one session a month to master a hymn that has grown rather familiar. Sunday school, Young People's Society, evening service, Weekday Club, any or all of these provide an opportunity. The Worship Committee may have plans in hand. But unless hymns are mastered somewhere, there can be no singing except with song-book in hand. Sacred song is worthy of greater use. The songs that are mastered remain a sacred memory and vehicle through life, impressing the mind more deeply than Scripture.

Hymnody means harmony. Its use helps to bring about

harmony between man and man; between man and his Maker.

Great Literature

To use Christian literature, not found in the Bible but breathing its spirit, nowise dishonours the Word of God. Rather it honours the Word because it recognizes these fruits of which the Word forms the roots. Some of our loftiest poetry has therefore been set to music and made hymnody;—witness Kipling's *Recessional* and Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*. Many great sayings are still awaiting the touch of an artist; but we may appropriate them now. Among modern writers Henry van Dyke has earned pre-eminence for lofty thought and delicate expression. "Four things a man must learn to do," has become a classic. "The worlds in which we live at heart are one," holds similar rank. His prose, too, can be used as part of a worship program, *The Other Wise Man*, *The Mansion*, and *The Lost Word* outstanding. Browning is heavier, but in such poems as *Saul* and *Ben Ezra* many popular yet sacred stanzas are available. Mrs. Browning is worth studying: "The Lord is in His holy place, in all things near and far. Shekinah of the snowflake, He, and glory of the star. And secret of the April wind that stirs the field of flowers. Whose little tabernacles rise to hold Him through the hours." Babcock, Oxenham, and Lanier offer many rich treasures.

The second inaugural address of Abraham Lincoln breathes the spirit of prayer, "Fondly do we hope and earnestly do we pray that this evil scourge of war may speedily pass away," etc. The utterances of great missionaries carry inspiration, "Anywhere, provided it be forward," by Livingstone, and his life-pledge, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."

In Macaulay's *History of England* are passages that so

greatly confirm Bible teachings, they really belong to them. Guyzot's *France*, specially Book VII, which treats of Napoleon, shows God's hand in history.

Hawthorne, though weird at times, has written a wealth of stories that carry Christian principles. *The Great Stone Face* is a classic. *The Celestial Railroad* is in contrast to *Pilgrim's Progress*. Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* contains many suggestive sketches. Tolstoy deserves delving into. Victor Hugo is rich in noble story material. George Eliot never wrote without teaching vital truths. The lives of great missionaries, Carey, Livingstone, Paton, Mary Slessor, and of such leaders as Mary Lyon, Alice Freeman Palmer, Marshall, Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt and Bryan, offer story upon story for use in the period of worship. Of late such books as *Fireside Stories* and *More Fireside Stories*, by Eggleston, have given us compilations of suitable stories. The various worship programmes in the *International Journal of Religious Education* usually have appropriate stories in them. But the best story for any leader's use is not offered him cut and dried. It comes from his general reading and personal experience. Each life experiences a story every day. And we who would lead others in worship must ever be ready to share with them the joys of discovery that come to us in daily contacts, conversations, and reading. No materials are common that serve to relate life to God. Nor is anything quite fine enough for the worship period that sounds uncertain notes of that holy relationship.

Growing people are constantly in need of more language and imagery whereby to express their thoughts. He who never needs a dictionary fossilizes. Choice language and beautiful pictures are requisites for bringing to others our loftiest ideas. Sacred writings and stories that reveal God incarnated among us are at our disposal. Thorough acquaintance with them renders us better vehicles of divine

truth if we learn to share our riches with those whom we would lead upward to the heart of God.

*"Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife
We hear Thy voice, O Son of man.*

*"In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed
We catch the vision of Thy tears.*

*"O Master, from the mountain side
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain.
Among these restless throngs abide;
O tread the city's streets again.*

*"Till sons of men shall learn Thy love
And follow where Thy feet have trod;
Till glorious from Thy heaven above
Shall come the City of our God."*

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Strickland writes, in his *Psychology of Religious Experience*, "When a worshipper praises God his frame of mind is such that no deliberate purpose comes to the surface. . . . Praise is a spontaneous outpouring of joy in the thought of God, of love for God and gratitude toward Him." Is this in agreement with experiences of the class? Are there qualifications to this statement in group singing?
2. What necessitates purpose in selection of hymns? Why, for instance, might we ask adolescents to sing, "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me"?
3. In view of sincerity as the basic principle of expression, discuss suitableness of hymns at certain occasions and not at others.
4. Observe the difference between songs and hymns; between objective and subjective hymns. Have illustrations contributed by the class.

5. Elicit expression of what hymns are best liked, and why. What hymns are disliked, and why.
6. Discuss advantages of old hymns; of recent hymns; also their disadvantages.
7. Study "Beautiful Isles of Somewhere," or a similar song, and decide on its meaning and usefulness.
8. Present two or three prayer-hymns and use at least one of them in prayer. Lift up worthful elements in them.
9. Briefly differentiate between Nature, Consecration, Idealistic and Social hymns. Why so few expressive of worship in the home?
10. Discuss the paid quartette, and local training in sacred hymnody.
11. Practice hymn-reading.

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XI

WORSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS

ARE we justified in expecting results when we worship? If so, what kind? In our earliest study, worship was thought of as a road. What were the implications as to results? Taking Christ's central teaching, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," it should be clear what fruitions we may look for. If results are spiritual chiefly, how soon may they be realized? "The mills of the gods grind slow." This is generally true also of God's ways with us. Would swiftness be a natural element in a programme that reaches into eternities?

When we look for results in prayer, we dare not attempt to employ God for our purposes; our expectations must be in line with God's purposes. Recall the story of Hophni and Phineas (1 Sam. 4). Then turn to the story of the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15). He grieved his father by asserting that their interests were divided. "All that I have is yours," said the father. Is this our feeling in prayer? Our interests are God's interests, and God's interests are ours. It is no longer "You and I," but "We." Convinced that God has charge of the affairs of a whole universe, but esteems the human being higher than sheep, than a herd of swine, than the Sabbath dedicated to Him, than all the world, can we reasonably fear lest our prayer centred in God rather than self, will be futile? "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass" (Psa. 37:5); and the verse just pre-

ceding even more to the point, "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

Thinking of prayer, then, as much more than petition, and rather as friendly conversation with God, what achievements may be confidently expected? To the answer we address ourselves in this chapter.

Astronomers, who make our great observatories their laboratory, select clear nights to gain distinct instructive pictures of the skies. The sensitive plate in its camera obscura is exposed to the stars and planets far away. In the morning the plate has received impressions of heavenly bodies which even the telescope had not detected. The images of invisible stars have impressed themselves upon it. The Senior's growing soul is like that exposed plate. Impressions are made upon it day by day, that remain in hazier or distincter form through life. When the soul engages in true worship, it has the qualities of a sensitive film exposed to the presence of God. Not in a day nor in a year, but slowly, indelibly and increasingly the likeness of God makes its impress on that soul, whose window opens toward heaven. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory of the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18). This is the greatest achievement of worship and the prayer-filled life. Let us consider some steps in that achievement.

Physical Results of Worship

1. *Laws of nature.* Two centuries ago there arose prominently among those, who had been worshippers of a sort, a group known as Deists. They believed that God had made the universe and had established its laws; but had then withdrawn Himself from its control because there was no further need of interference. Like a great clock, the world had been wound up to move in an orderly manner until the

works should run down or were worn out. Man might commune with God even when withdrawn from His world; but prayer would never include petition regarding nature. Prayers for the healing of the body, or for rain after drought, were to Deists little short of ridiculous. The laws of the universe controlled all that; God should not be troubled about such trivial matters.

The Deists as a school have long since been forgotten, but their teachings are disseminated among "even the elect." There are praying people who feel that prayer should never be petition; it should be conversation only. Prayer for matters concerning the body, or on behalf of changes in atmospheric conditions, are deemed almost blasphemous. If these teachings were correct they might serve to elevate the quality of prayer; but they would certainly limit its quantity and use. We are and feel ourselves so utterly dependent. Eliminate petition, and our confession of dependence on God is shorn of much expression. It is a historic fact that Deists did not raise their worship to higher and finer spheres, but forsook prayer altogether. This danger is not yet past if we follow their precepts.

Our chief Manual of Worship, the Bible, plainly teaches that God is retaining control of His universe, that He sends rain or storm not merely as predestined natural forces, but as expressions of His daily, fatherly providence and present solicitude; that these graces may be withheld at His command; or that, when they might hurt, "He maketh the storm a calm." Read Psa. 104; 107; Job 38; 39; Isa. 35; 40; 43; 44. The entire Bible is permeated with this teaching. Jesus healed the sick and stilled the storm. A strong east wind beat back the waters of the Red Sea to let the Hebrews pass through dryshod (Ex. 14:21). A mighty storm overthrew the Spanish Armada which had come to destroy the leading nations of Protestantism. "God is the

Ruler yet." We may boldly come to God asking for favourable weather, for success in studies and employment, for health of self and others. But the criterion needs ever to be remembered, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God;" and "All that I have is thine." We must identify our interests with those of God. Not to advantage ourselves, nor even our neighbours, but to prosper the blissful reign of God on earth, is the hope of a genuine prayer.

Take a look at The Lord's Prayer. It begins with "Our Father." This means identification from the start. Who can say to God, "Our Father"? Could any one have life except from God? As Creator, then, He is the Father of all mankind. Nevertheless, not every one can pray this prayer, though multitudes repeat it glibly at many occasions. We drone out, "Thy kingdom come." How can we pray this if we do not take our part in the work of bringing the kingdom in? "Thy will be done." May we utter this without hypocrisy if we fail to do His will and feel no concern whatever about our delinquencies? Certainly, the essence of it is that our interests and those of God are one. Again, we pray for daily bread. Could the Deist pray for that? Would he expect God to answer that prayer? And are we forgiving our debtors? If not, no results of prayer need be looked for. God does not favourably listen to a guilty heart that is unforgiving. "Be first reconciled with your brother," says Jesus. In short, we can come to God with anything as His children, if we live with Him; not if habitually we are at odds with Him.

2. *Physical grace.* An American, who had been absent from his native land for many decades, was asked what struck him most significantly in the new America. "The appearance of aged Christians," was his comment; not automobiles, or radios, but the beauty of expression on the face of devout worshippers. You have observed an aged minister.

His life has not been easy; his income never was large. His wife shared with him the limitations of forced economy. But daily they gained riches of a more permanent nature. Communion with God made its impress on their souls. They exposed their whole being to Him and received His likeness.

Then look at the person who has kept his soul from God and has instead indulged in sin. The image of evil has gradually settled on his features. His body, too, is suffering the consequences. In the battle of life, which youth will win,—he who practices secret prayer or he who indulges in secret sin?

*"One man was given an angel-face
By Him who fashions the human race,
But he went the path of the downward way
And roamed afar where the many stray.
He cast the dice and held carouse,
He was false to men and to all his vows;
His thoughts were all of the fell delights
Of the heated days and the sordid nights.
The years went on and the soul within,
The soul of the man who courted sin,
Had written down on that angel-face
A record long of dark disgrace,
Till people remarked as he tottered past,
'What a fiendish look on that poor outcast.'*

*"Another was given a misfit face
By Him who fashions the human race.
His skin was coarse; his cheeks were square;
His teeth were slanting everywhere.
His chin was weak, his mouth was wide,
Even horses looked at him and shied.
But his heart was good and his thoughts were clean.
He loved the truth and abhorred the mean.
The years went on and the soul within,
The soul of the man who hated sin,
Lit up that face till it seemed to shine
With a beauty rare of grace divine."*

Moderate living favours health. Observance of the Sabbath helps the high school student to be stronger for work during the week, and the working youth to start Mondays with renewed vigour.

Mental Achievements in Worship

The contents of the mind of the youth who has entered into the spirit of worship and has made use of sacred literature for his expressional life, are richer than those of the non-worshipping mind. He possesses materials for thought, that relieve tedious moments. In the writing of an essay or oration he has command of language to which the other student is a stranger. Lincoln and Shakespeare steeped themselves in the Scriptures, which provided backbone for their presentations. A snatch of a hymn, an utterance of the prophets, a saying of Jesus, invariably makes itself felt with an audience or in an argument. Acquaintance with this choicest literature means a rich treasury.

But the *ideas* suggested by sacred literature are of still greater value than their strength and beauty. Whoever thinks in terms of the spiritual deals with great problems, with duty, with eternities, infinities and the infinitesimal. The thoughts of God are far-reaching. Likewise "The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." In this the two ways of thinking agree. The youth who learns to think of divine verities is able to follow the best of his mental inclinations. Relating life to God helps him to view facts and experiences in their completeness; not just in fractions; and it is wholesome to see things whole. As a thinker, he desires power of concentration; but centering his thoughts on God means that. He wants to think clearly, and the sight of right relationships gives him clearness. The sense of God gives him right perspective.

It is observable anywhere that young people active in

Christian work gain *powers of leadership*. They master the art of thinking on their feet; they reach ability in planning a programme of action as well as of worship. They feel confident, while others suffer from nervousness. Mental superiority is theirs because they have earned it.

Moral Acumen

The story of the young man Joseph in Egypt remains ever new; let us recall it. Not a relative or friend was concerned with what he thought or did. Who cared whether he stood or fell? But when the great temptation came, at once the reaction was, "Can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" That youth was living consciously in the presence of God, so that to him sin meant a breaking of relationships with the Invisible.

1. *Relating self and all interests to God*, as must be done in worship, establishes also right relationships with others. Joseph was fair to Potiphar and to himself because he stood square with God. His morality found its roots in his religion. God was with him; how could he disappoint Him! Not a single prayer of Joseph has been preserved, so far as we know; but his life was a constant prayer. Joseph was moral because he worshipped; anything else would have involved him in hypocrisy. True worship means true morality.

2. Only in the light of God's meaning to us can we have a *right judgment of values*. Whatever serves God's interests must ultimately serve all human interests, our own included. God is the great Economist. His plans are for world order; they are benevolent. To understand Him aright includes measurements of things that appeal to us; for they are wholesome or hurtful according to the part they play in God's programme. God claims His right to wealth; but above all else stands out the value of life. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

3. A vision of Christ always means *purity*. We cannot companionship with Him and seek animal satisfactions. Victory over selfishness, greed, lust, temper, are found in fellowship with Him, which means, in prayer. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 5:9).

4. Out of the season of prayer comes the *courage* whereby we go out to fight evil, and establish righteousness. The worshipper is conscious of lining up with the forces of God. "The kingdom of God and his righteousness" is his aim in life. If the Bible with all its ethical instructions, and our hymnody with its inspiring purposes, mean anything, a holy determination must result which cannot be downed by any evil forces, and which will be sustained by divine power. The will and the emotions are influenced by every act and tendency of worship.

Spiritual Achievements

Whatever else prayer may be, it is supremely spiritual; its spiritual results are highest.

1. The Bible has been called "The Book of Life" because it brings the message of eternal life beginning on earth, and also because *it so truly portrays life*. It serves as a mirror through which we see ourselves, "A discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). By the same token our sacred Scriptures give us an insight into the motives of others; they aid us in the understanding of our fellow-men. As we understand the Scriptures our sympathies are enlarged; we are able to put ourselves in the place of others. Above all, the Scriptures introduce us to God. From them we gain a vision of His gracious plans for us and for all the world. The whole aspect of life gains spiritual significance. "The things that are

seen are temporal; the things that are not seen are eternal " (2 Cor. 4:18).

2. In committing our way to God because His principles are accepted as ours, we secure *a true perspective of social, national and world interests*. Petty bickerings sink into insignificance; principles come to the fore. We grasp the meaning of brotherhood without the sentimental froth that otherwise hinders its practice. Our brotherhood springs from the fatherhood of God. Events that frequently might astonish us, take their place in a world plan in which evil lifts up its ugly head against good. For we know the saying of Jesus, "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33), and the admonition of Paul, "Overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).

3. Worship imparts *the sense of co-operation with God and with fellow-Christians*. Having dedicated ourselves to Him, we know he "will not leave us or forsake us," while we are willing to help Him work out His programme. This begins at home. Doing the menial tasks among brothers and sisters is a true carrying out of our worship spirit. It reaches into the Church, where, in voluntary activities, faithfulness is at such a premium. Seniors are not yet ready to perform skilfully many forms of service; but they must be in preparation for leadership. Out into high school, and factory or shop, the spirit of worship moves with us; for everywhere we represent Christ. Our hands are His hands, our feet His feet, our tongues His tongue. This is the meaning of being a Christian.

4. Worship imparts *humility,—the sense of needing God and the help of other friends of God*. Every true prayer is a declaration of dissatisfaction with self. Such a conviction of personal shortcoming augurs progress; we cannot be content with present achievement. We press to the mark of our high calling; we learn to do better; we are disciples, that is, learners at the feet of Christ. Thus will skill in service be

acquired. Humility never says, "I am not able to do this; therefore I'll step aside and let another do it." Humility says, "I cannot now; but by the grace of God, I'll learn."

5. Worship multiplies itself into *a worshipping life*. Setting ourselves with all we have and plan in childlike relationship with God and in the midst of His kingdom, we slowly learn to extend these relationships into every sphere of thought and activity. We "Pray without ceasing," and, "Whether we eat or drink we do all to the glory of God." For this is the essence and spirit of prayer. There will be setbacks. We may greatly disappoint God, our friends, and ourselves; but our trend will be forward and upward. We are following the way of Christ.

The Meaning of These Achievements

1. He who regularly, earnestly, and intimately worships, acquires *skill in the finest art of living*. A Jewish schoolboy was waiting for the minister's son to go to school in the morning; but the minister's son delayed. "What kept you so long?" asked the little Jew. "O we had prayer at home," replied the young Christian. "Prayer?" queried the schoolmate. "What do you mean; what is prayer?" "Why, don't you know what prayer is!" exclaimed the son of the manse in surprise. "Prayer is talking to God, and my Dad knows how to do it." One reason there is so little cordial prayer on weeknights is that Christians have not privately acquired the art of praying; they never mastered its practice. But if God is the greatest fact in the world, then prayer is the greatest factor, and its achievement the greatest art.

2. The group that is learning to worship *makes its influence felt* beyond itself. There is life in the group; for it drinks from the living fountain, and from it life goes out, according to the promise of Jesus (John 4:14). Members of

a truly worshipping group dedicate themselves to life-service,—some for the foreign field, some for full-time ministries at home, others for business or profession. They are the working church of tomorrow; the germinal church today. Those to whom a sense of divine presence is not alluring will leave such company in disgust.

3. The whole *attitude toward life undergoes a change* as the worshipper learns to attune his will to the will of God. He can never despair; for such a word is not found in the divine vocabulary. Courage is his comrade, because God is in his heart. If any lustful thought knocks at his soul for entrance, he will not admit it, for the All-Pure is his Friend. He who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, has glorified humble service. And permeating both prayer and action is deep reverence, the practice of the presence of God. Life thus issues into one great Thanksgiving Day.

4. *The worshipping heart grows Christlike.* Read again *The Great Stone Face*, by Hawthorne. It is a picture of the young Christian's experience. From day to day the face of Ernest approached the likeness of that noble face carved in the rock, because his thoughts were centred on the ideal whom that great face represented. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

The Naturalness of Worship

Is the hymn true that sings, "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath; the Christian's native air"? Is worship unnatural for the youth from fifteen to seventeen; or is it unnatural not to worship? As we approach the close of our studies we should be able to answer this question. "In him we live and move and have our being," Paul quoted from the Greeks (Acts 17:28). But more than a millennium before, Moses had given vent to the same sublime utterance, "Lord,

thou hast been our dwelling-place." One day that man of God was herding the sheep in the desert when he saw a bush afire. Approaching it, there came a voice, "The place you are standing on is holy ground." Centuries earlier Jacob had seen a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, a symbol of the constant communication between the visible and the invisible world. "Surely God is in this place," he said. His eyes had been opened to see. God is here ever and always. "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God. But only those who see take off their shoes. The rest sit 'round it and eat blackberries."

A score of years ago, when we started out on our Christian educational work, we rode on a train through forests in Wisconsin through which an aged missionary had frequently tramped in the course of his ministries. Sweeping his hand in that direction, he remarked, "Holy ground. I've stepped on every foot of it." We looked at him with unuttered questioning. Was he an egotist? But later we traced his steps; the homes where he had slept, but never went to bed without the family first kneeling in prayer with him; the lads on whose head he had laid hands of prayer that they might be Christ's. Yes, wherever that man of God moved was holy ground; for he brought God there.

The New Testament always advances beyond the Old. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). If we live in God, then God also lives in us. The place we stand on, or walk, or sit, is holy, because through us God is there, "My heart an altar and Thy love the flame."

Life as a Ceaseless Prayer

Although worship must never deteriorate into mechanism, it is wholesome to form the habit of prayer. On arising from our beds, let us look at the day with God. We can do this

best by means of a moment of prayer. When we eat, let us acknowledge the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Jesus never ate without giving thanks. Shall we not do as Jesus did? In restaurant or hotel, among friends who have forgotten, among others who feel slightly embarrassed, silently let us bow the head before partaking of God's bounties. Starting a meeting, whether large or small, invoke God's guidance. In the midst of activities, programme, or lesson, pray. At the breaking up of a meeting, plead divine companionship homeward and for carrying out of plans. Definitely pray in private and in public. Pray without ceasing.

But let this private or group prayer be a symbol of our inner relationships with God and with others. "I want to be a Christian,—in my heart," we may sing with the negro. Prayer cannot safely be confined to stated periods; these only serve to lift the whole of life. Prayer must permeate our studies; our work. God sent us into the world to work with Him; for His programme is comprehensive. Our studies and our work are phases of our worship, if we relate them to God. Failing this, our stated prayers are empty. But worshipping with and through our daily task we begin on earth what shall never be finished; for through the eternities "His servants shall serve him."

There is a simple story of "Brother Lawrence; The Practice of the Presence of God," told by himself nearly two centuries ago. To him the monastery seemed the only possible place for constant communion with God. Great was his disappointment when, on entering that institution, he found himself assigned to kitchen duties that required most of his time. But Brother Lawrence learned that God was in the kitchen, too. While peeling potatoes and cleaning kettles he practiced the presence of God.

The close of these studies marks the beginning of arduous

effort. The worshippers of whom we have been thinking were not enjoying this course with us; they are quite innocent of all our considerations. Yet, on their behalf, as related to the Kingdom of God, we have carried on this work. What shall we do about it? To impose our ideas and convictions on them were disastrous. To march ahead of them, expecting them to follow, were foolhardy; we cannot move onward with them except abreast. There is need of consecrated tact.

Personal prayer for a vital touch with God and sympathetic understanding of our group is our first requisite. We need inflow of divine grace and outflow of Christian love. There is great call for courage to initiate, and for wisdom to lead aright.

As we need help from above, so we stand in need of help from the group itself. God has provided helpers among them. He found Elijah lying under a juniper tree, utterly despairing; because that man of God had failed to discover co-workers. God told him of seven thousand friends. That nucleus which God in His good providence has always provided, we must find and with them we shall start. Two or three genuine worshippers find Christ in the midst of them. From these the leaven of true worship spreads. For as the Kingdom of God, so is worship, "like a leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole is leavened."

*"O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.*

*"Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear, winning word of love.
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.*

*"Teach me Thy patience, still with Thee
In closer, dearer company;
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In trust that triumphs over wrong.*

*"In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way.
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live."*

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Open the way for testimony of results following prayer,—from experience, from others, from literature. If instances could be cited from the life of adolescents, they would be specially valuable.
2. Expression may be given to experience of easy and difficult worship,—times when God heard so readily, and times when the heavens seemed closed. Reasons, if possible.
3. Discuss the modern trend to neglect prayer concerning divine control of nature. There are good and hurtful elements in it; criticize them. Consider instances of answers to prayer through control of nature.
4. Trace natural results of commitment of cares to God; of "thinking God's thoughts after Him." Gather illustrations. Fairly consider Christian Science and Unity.
5. Discuss obvious requisites of worship, as given by Christ.
6. Consider educational effects of Bible reading; perusal of Christian literature; attendance at Worship Services; participation in worship, testimony and teaching.
7. Relate worship to morality,—personal, in business, in society, in politics. Why are United States Presidents almost invariably known to grow serious in worship?
8. For what main reason may the Bible be called, "The Book of Life"?
9. How do "Red and Blue Contests" and the like compare with a truly worshipping group of adolescents for numerical growth?
10. Secure testimony regarding increase or decrease of adolescent appreciation of worship and trace reasons.

11. Encourage personal testimony of victory through prayer. Testimony from experiences with adolescents; of adolescents' personal experiences.
12. Close with discussion of definite plans for adolescent worship in each local church.

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